

Tamil Nadu: People's Watch demands CB-CID inquiry into custodial death of auto driver

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MADURAI: People's Watch, a human rights organisation based in Madurai, has demanded a CB-CID inquiry into the death of autorickshaw driver A Manikandan, who died in police custody, on Saturday morning. The Karimedu police arrested Manikandan on Friday evening for creating a ruckus and he was rearrested the same night for attacking a man.

Executive director of People's Watch, Henri Tiphagne who addressed reporters here on Tuesday, said that fair inquiry cannot be expected by the city police, which has left no stone unturned to safeguard its personnel involved in the custodial torture, which led to Manikandan's death.

Tiphagne said the family members were called to the police station in the midnight of Friday informing that Manikandan was not well and needs to be hospitalized. Once they reached the station, police decided against taking him to hospital and sent the family back. When Manikandan saw his family members, he pleaded with them to take him home as he was being tortured by the police.

On Saturday morning, police called the family again to inform them that Manikandan had developed health complications and admitted to the Government Rajaji Hospital. When they reached the hospital, they were not allowed to meet him. They came to know that he was dead only when his body was being taken to the mortuary through the back entry of the ward.

Tiphagne said that the postmortem took place between 11 and 11.30pm and questioned the necessity of carrying it out at odd hours, violating norms. Moreover, the body was not handed over to the family members, who wanted to take it to Palanganatham to be buried there. Against their will the city police took the body to Thathaneri and cremated it. All these violations took place under the watchful eyes of the city police commissioner and deputy commissioner of police (law and order) and other higher police officers, he claimed.

A complaint was sent to the DGP, home secretary and chief secretary on behalf of Manikandan's father Andisamy, insisting CB-CID probe, compensation and identification parade so that the family members can identify the erring policemen involved in the custodial torture.

Tiphagne also recalled how opposition parties in Kerala recently walked out of the assembly condemning a custodial death. Similarly, opposition parties in Tamil Nadu too should take up the issue in assembly.

He also demanded intervention by the district and state legal aid services to help the deprived families.