

JAACT condemns extra-judicial killings by police

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Joint Action Against Custodial Torture – Tamil Nadu (JAACT) , in a statement issued here on Monday, said it was aware of the sensitivity involved in the investigation of the murder of Armstrong, former State leader of Bahujan Samaj Party, but police resorting to extra-judicial measures, including shooting down people, would not bring the perpetrators to justice.

“When ‘Seizing’ Raja [who was killed in a police encounter in Chennai on Monday] was caught by the police from Andhra Pradesh, it was said that he was a person of interest in Mr. Armstrong’s murder investigation, but after his killing, the same police clarified that Mr. Raja was not apprehended related to this case. This clarification raises many questions and will lead to the public losing confidence in the police investigation in the case,” the statement added.

The recent incidents had also revealed the nexus between the rowdies and members of political parties, including those practising law, hence the onus was on the government to conduct impartial investigation to prosecute the real perpetrators to instil confidence again in the police force.

"We are saddened to note that Raja is the 16th person to be killed in extra-judicial killing since the present DMK government came to power in May 2021. We would like to reiterate that extra-judicial killings or custodial torture should not be tolerated in a progressive society like Tamil Nadu and the government should put an end to its encounter model of preserving law and order," the statement said.

This denoted that the government had lost its faith in effective prosecution of perpetrators and rather relying on illegal and extra-judicial means which was only a knee-jerk reaction to cover up the incompetence to conduct a free and fair investigation, it added.

The forum also requested the Madras High Court to immediately intervene in the 'unchecked use of extra-judicial killings by a suo moto intervention. It also suggested that the court order a commission of inquiry including former High Court Judges and reputed former officials to bring out the truth behind the killings.

"We call upon State Human Rights Commission to urgently intervene in the latest incident by forming a fact-finding team and conducting an independent investigation and ensure that crucial evidence is not tampered with," it added.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/jaact-condemns-extra-judicial-killings-by-police/article68674297.ece>