

Human rights org condemns TN IPS officers defending cop accused of custodial violence

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“Media and public pressure alone have led to the few follow-ups in the custodial torture case,” People’s Watch said in response to claims of the accused IPS officer being subjected to a media trial.

People’s Watch, a human rights organisation based in Madurai, strongly condemned the Tamil Nadu IPS Officers’ Association’s support for the suspended IPS officer Balveer Singh, accused of custodial violence. People’s Watch questioned whether all the IPS officers in Tamil Nadu shared the opinion that Balveer Singh was being subjected to a ‘media trial’. The statement said, “Media and public pressure alone have led to the few follow-ups [in the case] that we are witnessing today — whether it is the suspension of Balveer Singh IPS and putting him on a compulsory waitlist or placing SP Saravanan again on a compulsory wait list.”

The Tamil Nadu IPS Officers’ Association, led by Abhash Kumar IPS, came to Balveer’s support by saying that the media was covering the issue in a “selective manner”. People’s Watch asked, “What would Abhash Kumar, IPS have to say about police parading ‘alleged criminals’ before the media many times even before an FIR is registered and no investigation is carried out?” They further said that Balveer Singh has been accused of many counts of custodial violence at the Ambasamudram police station where he was the Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP).

Listing past instances where Balveer was accused of torture, the organisation questioned why the District Collector of Tirunelveli and the Superintendent of Police did not launch an immediate inquiry into the complaints. The statement further asked whether the Ambasamudram police station had followed all the rules regarding the placement of CCTV cameras in police stations.

They also questioned why two minors were kept in police custody, handcuffed, tortured and threatened to not speak about their abuse despite them violating the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Meanwhile, the statement also pointed out how the victims were threatened by the police officers to ensure that they do not depose before the Judicial Magistrate and doctors.

“Clean your house – Abhash Kumar IPS – before issuing this kind of a statement. I also acknowledge the fact that there are very straightforward and honest IPS officers in the state who will not agree with this statement. The anti-torture and human rights movements across the globe will be following the actions taken up in this regard and will not remain mute spectators to this pathetic incident of an IPS officer of your stature running to the rescue to protect a subordinate officer from illegal actions they have committed,” the statement added.

On April 4, the Tamil Nadu IPS Officers’ Association accused the media of covering the issue in a “selective manner.” The statement further alleged that there are “vested interests are being propagated on social media to influence evidence, witnesses, investigating agencies and the public.” The statement also said that such “pre-judged reporting might affect the ongoing investigation.” The Association also asked the media to “exercise discretion on publication of this matter in the media till the completion of the inquiry for the impartial administration of justice.”

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/human-rights-org-condemn-tn-ips-officers-defending-cop-accused-custodial-violence-175502>