

## **TN govt appoints IAS officer Amudha to probe custodial torture by Balveer Singh**

The decision comes days after more victims, including minors, alleged custodial torture by IPS officer Balveer Singh, and the state government faced sharp criticism over inaction.

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The Tamil Nadu government has tasked senior IAS officer Amudha P to look into the allegations of custodial torture by suspended IPS officer Balveer Singh. The decision comes days after more victims, including minors, alleged custodial torture by Singh and the state government faced sharp criticism over inaction. Balveer was suspended on March 29 and eight others were transferred to the Armed Forces. After Tirunelveli District Collector KP Karthikeyan ordered a probe, the Cheranmahadevi Sub-Collector conducted an inquiry and submitted a report on April 3. Following this, Karthikeyan recommended a high-level probe by a senior officer. Amudha will have to submit a report in one month.

Reacting to the development, Executive Director of the People's Watch Henri Tiphagne told TNM that the government was adopting delaying tactics to avoid registering a First Information Report (FIR) against Balveer Singh. "The RDO [Revenue Divisional Officer] enquiry is already in place and victims have already started deposing. The police station visit shows that crucial CCTV footage from March 10 is missing. Why is the case still being covered-up? This continuing inhumane treatment and torture of victims is only to avoid registration of an FIR and the arrest of brutal IPS officer Balveer Singh," he said. The custodial torture came to light on March 26 when three men shared their ordeal in a video that began doing the rounds on social media. The men claimed that they were taken to the Ambasamudram police station and were beaten up and their teeth were broken by the then ASP Balveer Singh. One of the men, Chellappa, told in the video that his brother was kicked in the chest by the police officers and was also sexually assaulted by them.

On March 28, the Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) took suo-motu cognisance of the case based on media reports and decided to launch an investigation. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, during an Assembly session on March 29, said that Balveer Singh had been suspended. On March 31, the SHRC summoned Balveer Singh for questioning.

As investigations were being conducted, it was revealed that some of the people who were subjected to custodial violence at the Ambasamudram police station were minors and were from marginalised communities. People's Watch, a human rights organisation, based in Madurai and the parents of the minor victim demanded that an FIR be filed against Balveer Singh and the guilty police officers and ensure that necessary action is taken against them.

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/tn-govt-appoints-ias-officer-amudha-probe-custodial-torture-balveer-singh-175606>