

Re-postmortem ordered on fisher's body allegedly killed by Lankan Navy

The Madurai Bench on Tuesday ordered re-postmortem on the body of Rajkiran, a Pudukkottai fisherman who died last month after his boat was allegedly hit by a Sri Lankan vessel.

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By Express News Service

MADURAI: The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court on Tuesday ordered re-postmortem on the body of Rajkiran (28), a fisherman from Pudukkottai, who died last month after his boat was allegedly hit by a Sri Lankan vessel.

Hearing a petition filed by Rajkiran's wife Brunda, Justice GR Swaminathan noted that though a postmortem examination was reportedly conducted on the body at Jaffna Medical College, a report of the same had not been furnished to his family. "A body, said to be that of Rajkiran, was brought (to India) in a sealed coffin and even without the petitioner being allowed to see the body, it was straightaway buried," he further observed. Hence, Brunda suspects that her husband was shot dead by the Sri Lankan Navy, he added.

"When such genuine apprehensions are raised by the deceased's family, it is the duty of the State to allay the same," Justice Swaminathan opined. He directed the Kottaiappattinam police and Manamelkudi tahsildar to exhume Rajkiran's body on Thursday. A re-postmortem examination should be conducted immediately on the spot itself, he added. He also permitted the petitioner's counsel to depute an independent forensic expert to be present during the autopsy process. A report of the re-postmortem should be submitted to the court during the next hearing on November 24, the judge said and adjourned the case.

According to Brunda's petition, Rajkiran went fishing from Kottaiappattinam shore on October 18. Over 100 trawlers ventured into the sea that day from Kottaiappattinam. "When they were fishing in mid sea, the Lankan naval authorities intercepted them and tried to arrest them for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. At that time, it is alleged that Rajkiran attempted to flee and the Lankan vessel accidentally hit his boat causing it to sink. The Lankan Navy claimed that Rajkiran drowned. But a photograph of Rajkiran's body and eye-witnesses' version indicate that Rajkiran was shot dead by the Lankan authorities," she alleged

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