

## Human rights org demands action against TN cop who smashed teeth of detainees

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023 - 10:49

Ambasamudram ASP Balveer Singh IPS had pulled out the teeth of six people and beaten them with lathis at the Ambai police station on March 10.



People's Watch, a human rights organisation based in Madurai, has issued a statement condemning the custodial violence by Ambasamudram Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Balveer Singh, who has been transferred from his post by the Tamil Nadu

government and put on a compulsory waiting list. The ASP had pulled out the teeth of six people and beaten them with lathis at the Ambai police station on March 10. The six people were even warned to not speak in court about being subjected to the torture at the police station. In the statement, People's Watch said that both the Judicial Magistrate and the remand advocate had failed to notice the injuries on the six men which helped the ASP "dodge the criminal justice system."

The organisation further made a list of demands to ensure that the six men are rehabilitated and the police officers involved are punished for their actions. People's Watch called for the suspension of the IPS officer and the policemen who were involved in the torture. People's Watch said that criminal action must be initiated against those involved, after an Executive Magistrate inquiry is conducted.

The statement said that the High Court portfolio judges responsible for Tirunelveli must launch an inquiry into why the Judicial Magistrate did not notice the injuries on the men's bodies. People's Watch also demanded that an inquiry be launched into why the lawyer provided to the six men did not find time to meet them despite the custodial violence.

Speaking about the mental health of the policemen, People's Watch said that Balveer Singh must be under strict psychiatric and mental health examinations before he is put back into any form of policing. Since the incident took place on March 10 but came to light nearly ten days later, the organisation called for a complete overhaul of the intelligence system in Ambasamudram. It also highlighted that several incidents like this have happened but most of them were not brought out. The statement further called for action against all the police officers who were involved in hiding the incidents.

Finally, People's Watch called for an inquiry into why such serious custodial violence incidents have not been brought to the attention of the state, even as the Tamil Nadu Assembly session was going on. The statement also drew parallels to the custodial death of a young man named Vignesh in Chennai as the state's budget session was going on and Chief Minister MK Stalin was "misled" about the case for close to two weeks.

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