

Police accused of torturing two murder suspects in Kancheepuram, SHRC launches probe

Both the accused have had to undergo kidney dialysis reportedly due to internal injuries caused by alleged police brutality, said the Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAACT) Secretary.

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A Tamil Nadu civil rights group, Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAACT), has reported that two accused persons in a murder case have been tortured by the Kancheepuram police. The two accused, Prabhu and Valayapathi, have been charged with the murder of a retired woman inspector. A preliminary investigation by JAACT said that Prabhu has been under treatment at the Chengalpattu Medical College Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), while Valayapathi was in the ICU for 19 days before being shifted back to Vellore prison on September 15. Based on JAACT's report, the Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission has launched an inquiry into the matter. The JAACT have now demanded criminal action against all the concerned officers and have also demanded that the murder case be shifted to the CB-CID.



According to the JAACT report, both the accused had several blood clots on their bodies from being reportedly beaten with iron pipes and lathis. There were burns on Prabhu's back, and his nails showed signs of extreme trauma, the JAACT report said.

Retired police inspector Kasthuri (62) was found dead at her residence in Kancheepuram on August 21. Kasthuri, who was living alone, had not responded since August 20 to the phone calls of her son, residing in Uttarakhand. He reportedly called E Valayapathi (65), former Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) Kancheepuram district secretary and Kasthuri's friend, to check on his mother. Valayapathi reportedly found Kasthuri dead in her house, and he alerted the Siva Kanchi police.

The Siva Kanchi police arrested a local electrician and a close aide of Valayapathi called Prabhu on August 25 and a day later arrested Valayapathi. The Siva Kanchi police said that Valayapathi was trying to convince Kasthuri to undersell her house, which she refused to. On August 18, they got into an argument about the sale of the house, and Valayapathi allegedly assaulted Kasthuri, and she died as a result of her injuries.

Prabhu, who was in police custody from August 25 was rushed to Chengalpattu Government College Hospital on August 28. His family was told that he had met with a bike accident while trying to escape the police. He was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and has since been in a critical condition. The JAACT report said that the injuries in his body hinted at extreme police torture.

Valayapathi was also tortured by the police, the JAACT report said. On August 29, he was remanded in Vellore Central Prison after being produced before the Chengalpattu district magistrate. At Vellore

prison, Valayapathi fainted and was rushed to the Vellore Government Hospital, where he was admitted to the ICU. He was discharged 19 days later and was remanded in prison again.

Asirvadham, Secretary of JAACT, told TNM, “Both Prabhu and Valayapathi had developed severe health complications. Both of them had to undergo dialysis even though they had never had kidney-related ailments. This is very similar to the Sathankulam police brutality cases. Those who had alleged brutality by the Sathankulam police in Thoothukudi had to eventually undergo dialysis.”

Asirvadham further added that criminal action should be initiated against DSP Manimegalai, ADSP Charles Samuvel Durairaj, ASP Udhayakumar, and the inspector of Siva Kanchi police station Jayavel. The JAACT report also said that the government doctor who provided Valayapathi’s medical certificate had not revealed the injuries and had given a clean chit to the police. “Action should be initiated against all the government officers, including the doctors, who have favoured the police in covering up police misconduct,” he added.

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