

Dalit man dies in TN police custody; family alleges torture, refuses to accept body

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A 26-year-old Dalit man, Akash Delison, died in police custody in the early hours of March 8 in Sivaganga district, triggering outrage over allegations of custodial torture. His family has refused to receive the body and continues to protest, demanding justice. The probe into the death has been transferred to the CB-CID.

Akash, an engineering graduate, had been picked up by the Manamadurai police along with an acquaintance, Guna, following allegations that the duo attacked and injured two men — P Jayakumar, 37, and R Azhagar, 40 — using sharp weapons.

According to a report by [The Hindu](#), the two were taken into custody on March 6. A First Information Report was registered the same day under Sections 324(2) (mischief), 296(b) (obscene acts and songs), 118(1) (voluntarily causing grievous hurt), 109(1) (attempt to murder), and 351(3) (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Akash was remanded to judicial custody until March 18. During police custody, Akash suffered a broken leg, with police claiming that he sustained the injury while attempting to evade arrest.

The family told the media that they had met Akash on Saturday, March 7, during which he described being abused by the police.

According to Akash's father, a heavy stone was placed above and below his leg, causing it to break. Following this, the police rushed him to Government Rajaji Hospital without informing them, the father said.

Akash's family staged a protest on the Madurai–Rameswaram Highway near the Manamadurai bus stand, demanding strict action against the police personnel involved.

Activists have strongly condemned the DMK government over its failure to curb police excesses. According to human rights activist Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, a total of 27 people have died in police custody.

"I can't and don't want to hold a government responsible for custodial deaths. But the culture of custodial deaths in Tamil Nadu only continued with the DMK government, so much so that what started in 2021 has ended in 2026 with a tally of 27 different persons who have died in police custody and 15 others in 13 incidents have been killed in what they call 'encounter killings,'" he said.

Referring to earlier promises of reform, Tiphagne added: "Since 2019, the DMK has offered numerous assurances following the Thoothukudi police firing findings, creating hope among survivors' families, the general public, and even their own alliance partners. When they came to power in 2021, they received an interim report, followed by the final report of the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission in 2022. That report clearly indicted officers ranging from the DGP to head constables with well-documented evidence. Yet, to date, we have only seen retirements; there have been no criminal prosecutions," he said.

In July, TNM had reported that Tamil Nadu recorded 27 deaths in police custody over the past five years. While there is no updated official count, concerns over custodial violence and deaths continue to persist in the state.

Similarly, P Shanmugam of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemned the incident. "It is evident from the facts that Akash was subjected to severe torture before being murdered, as his leg was broken. Such excessive and anarchic actions by the police continue."

He demanded that appropriate action be taken against all the police personnel who were on duty at the station when Akash died.