



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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September 25, 2021

To,  
Mr. C S Mawri,  
Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Assistant Registrar,  
National Human Rights Commission,  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi – 110 023  
Email: [hrd-nhrc@nic.in](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

**Dear Sir,**

**Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action- Tamil Nadu: Brutal Murder of HRD due to police negligence in protecting whistleblower for raising issues regarding drug dealings in Thirupathur.**

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert - India!

HRD Alert - India is a forum of Human Rights Defenders for Human Rights Defenders. It endeavours to initiate actions on behalf of Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns.

We are writing to express our shock regarding the brutal torture and murder of HRD Mr. Waseem Akram at Vaniyambadi in Thirupathur district of Tamil Nadu. He was not provided adequate safety and protection by the local police despite being a whistleblower regarding local drug dealings.

**Source of Information:**

Communication with the HRDs in the region  
Communication with our HRDA Southern regional consultant  
Information from social media and newspapers

**Date of Incident:**

September 10, 2021

**Place of Incident:**

Vaniyambadi Town, Thirupathur, Tamil Nadu

**Perpetrators:**

Mr. Chakravarthy, Superintendent of Police, Thirupathur  
Mr. Govindasamy, Vaniyambadi Taluk Inspector  
Mr. Deel Imthiyas

**About the Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Waseem Akram (35) was a former under secretary of State for Social Services and Humanitarian Democrats, the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward Councillor of Vaniyambadi and a social activist, who was part of the Joint Action Committee for raising social concerns. He was actively involved in voluntary activities such as distributing ration kits to more than 2500 families in the locality and burying more than 350 people who died due to COVID-

19 and had been left unattended. Several people in the locality sought assistance on issues relating to rights violation and other social issues.

### **Background of the Case:**

Mr. Akram had been active in fighting the menace of drug addiction among the youth in the locality. Mr. Deel Imthiyas, who owns a scrap shop and has been known to threaten people with real estate related issues, is an alleged local drug dealer.

On August 27, 2021, based on locally sourced information, the Thirupathur Superintendent of Police, Mr. Chakravarthy and his team raided the godown of Mr. Imthiyas. The police found around 10 kgs of marijuana worth almost 20 lakhs along with sharp weapons and arrested two people on the spot. Mr. Imthiyas evaded arrest and has been absconding since then. Mr. Imthiyas also believed that that Mr. Akram was the whistleblower who told the police about the marijuana stored in the godown, and his family alleges that this information was leaked by the local inspector to the alleged drug dealer.

### **Details of the Incident:**

On September 10, 2021, around 6:40 pm, while returning home from the prayer service at the mosque, about 200 meters from his house, Mr. Akram was chased by a group of 6 goons with knives. To prevent Mr. Akram from running away they first chopped off his hand and leg and then started cutting him in multiple places brutally. Faced with such extreme torture, Mr. Akram died on the spot in a pool of blood. This act of brutal murder was performed to threaten the people in the locality.

On September 10, 2021, an FIR (No. 625/2021) was registered under section 154 Cr.P.C under sections 147(Punishment for rioting), 148(Rioting, armed with deadly weapon),294(b) (sings, recites or utters any obscene song, ballad, or words, in or near any public place), 302 (murder) at Vaniyambadi Town Police station Thirupathur against Mr. Imthiyas, Mr. Prasanth and Mr. Dilli.

On September 14, 2021, six persons involved in the murder of Mr. Akram surrendered before the Thanjavur district court. However, the main culprit behind the brutal and shocking torture and murder of the HRD, Mr. Imthiyas, is still absconding.

We believe that this murder happened due to the shocking inaction by the local police's inability to provide security to Mr. Akram as an informant and failed to provide adequate safety and security due to whistleblowers as per the law. According to the Indian law, the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 Chapter 5- Protection to the persons making disclosure (11. Safeguards against victimization 12. Protection of witnesses and other persons,13. Protection of identity of complainant). Internationally, whistleblowing is an integral part of freedom of expression, protected under Article 19 of the ICCPR as well as other standards such as UN Convention against Corruption.

The police also failed to arrest Mr. Imthiyas at the initial raid conducted by the SP and his team and failed to provide protection to the HRD who had tipped them off about the drugs. The family of the HRD alleges that the Vaniyambadi Taluk local Inspector Mr. Govindasamy had told Mr. Imthiyas about the informant's details, which led to Mr. Imthiyas targeting and brutally murdering Mr. Akram.

Finally, though they were informed repeatedly about the drug gangs operating in the region, the police took no steps to arrest or investigate the criminals. Their negligence


has been responsible for the brutal torture and killing of a fine young man who was working for public good.

**Appeal:**

We urge to the Hon'ble Commission to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Direct the Director General of Police of Tamil Nadu for an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective, and impartial investigation against the police of Thirupathur who failed to provide security to the Mr. Wasim Akram and led to leak of information regarding his identity and henceforth to his brutal murder. There should also be an inquiry in the failure of local police to arrest Mr. Imthiyas who is absconding till now. The report of the investigation should be placed before the Hon'ble Commission in two weeks.
- Based on the investigation direct the Director General of Police of Tamil Nadu to take stern action against the police officials -Thirupathur Superintendent of Police- Mr. Chakravarthy and Vaniyambadi Taluk Inspector – Mr. Govindasamy.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Tamil Nadu for an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective, and impartial investigation into illegal activities in the locality and the local police's indifference towards them, even after being informed.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Tamil Nadu to provide complete security for the family of Mr. Waseem Akram as they face threats from the drug gang and give it in writing to the NHRC that no harm shall come to them.
- Direct the Chief Secretary, Tamil Nadu to take necessary steps for providing congenial atmosphere to human rights defenders and journalists for smooth working in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Yours sincerely,



**Henri Tiphagne**  
National Working Secretary