

# **Environmental Rights Activist and Human Rights Defender Jagabar Ali's Assassination – Preliminary Fact Finding Report**

---

**Human Rights Defenders Alert – Tamil Nadu**

**9994368571, 9994368540**

---

## **1. Findings**

Jagabar Ali S/o Karim Rowther, an Environmental Human Rights Defender (EHRD), he belongs to Vengalur village, Thirumayam taluk of Pudukkottai district. As a result of his first marriage he has two sons namely Mohammad Yasin (35) and Mohammad Sultan (33). Subsequently he was married to Mrs Mariam (38) as a result they have three children, the eldest daughter is Ishat Mublisa (17), who has completed Class 12 and is studying for NEET examination. The second daughter is Ijat Jamila (15) is studying in Karaikudi and the third son is Abdul Rafiq Kareem (12) is studying in the school.

The EHRD owns a Halo Block manufacturing unit in the K. Pallivasal area. He was also a union committee member and union minority wing secretary of the AIADMK. Apart from his political activism, he has been constantly complaining to the government authorities against the stone quarries operating illegally in Thirumayam area and has been intervening in the courts. Despite knowing that there is a threat to his life he continued his activism as a EHRD and worked to protect the environment and natural mineral resources.

## **2. Illegal stone quarries**

Persons belonging to Thirumayam Taluk, Valayal Vayal

1. Ramaiah S/o Sankaram Pillai,
2. Rasu S/o Raman,
3. Mrs. Azhagu W/o Ramaiah
4. Mrs. Chinnammal W/o Rasu,

All of them collectively as a group and indirectly as a team engaged in various quarries and crushers illegally in and around Thirumayam Union area.

1. R.R. Crusher, Valayanvayal Thulayanur Panchayat

2. St. Arogya Annai Crusher, Sandanawiduthi, Thulaiyanur Panchayat
3. Eswar Enterprises, Kalluvayal Road, Meyyapuram, K.Pallivasal
4. R.R. Sand Unit -1, Valayanvayal, Thulaiyanur Panchayat
5. R.R.M Sand Unit, Valayanvayal, Thulaiyanur Panchayat

The above mentioned crushers have been running as a joint venture for a long time. The owners have been operating quarries in patta lands and government lands after obtaining permission from the government. They have also extracted minerals exceeding the permitted limits. In government investigation it has been found that they had been involved in illegal mining, thus a penalty of about 25 cores has been levied on them by the government. But till date, the quarry owners have not paid the fine amount and have filed a case in the High Court and it has been going on for a long time.

In this situation, the above quarry owners do not possess any licence approved by the government for the last one year. Specifically,

- 1) Thulaiyanur, Government Land (Poramboke) S.R No: 409 - The stone quarry has been functioning in an area of 1.20 hectares and the lease/licence has expired on 29.08.2022.
- 2) Thulaiyanur Government Poramboke S.F No: 409 - (Part-3) The stone quarry has been operating in an area of 0.72.0 hectares and the lease/licence has expired on 13.11.2023.

**Note:** The R.R stone quarry was operational when the field inspection team visited the quarry on 24.01.2025. The workers in the quarry are mostly North Indians and their temporary settlement has been set up on the opposite side of the quarry.

### **3. Illegal quarrying in residential areas**

The R.R. Crusher is located on the Sivaganga-Pudukkottai road, after crossing K. Mosque, about 100 metres away from the road which was used by the villagers. The road leading to the village is full of potholes and dust due to operations of the crusher. The residence settlements of the villagers are 10 meters away from the quarry and at about 20 meters there is Valayanvayal village in which there are around 200 houses.

### **Complaint to Government Officials - Court Intervention**

1. R.R. Crusher, Valayanvayal, Thulaiyanur Panchayat

2. St. Arogya Annai Crusher, Sandanawiduthi, Thulaiyanur Panchayat
3. Eswar Enterprises, Kallu Vayal Road, Meyyapuram, K.Pallivasal
4. R.R. Sand Unit - 1 – Valayanvayal, Thulaiyanur Panchayat
5. R.R.M Sand Unit, Valayanvayal, Thulaiyanur Panchayat

The permission for the above quarries was obtained on 14.11.2018 and the permission expired on 13.11.2023. However, the quarries continues to operate illegally to this day. The EHRD Jagabar Ali on 04.1.2023 and 31.1.2023 complained against stone quarries for illegally extracting minerals to :-

1. District Collector, Pudukottai,
2. District Assistant Director, Mineral Resources Department,
3. Thirumayam Tahsildar
4. Thirumayam Revenue Inspector,
5. Director of State Geology and Mining Department,
6. District Superintendent of Police

The EHRD has also sent complaints to various other government officials, But no action has been initiated by the authorities. He has filed a case in the Madurai High Court Bench (WP (MD).8946/2023) obtained an order on 5.9.2023 to investigate illegal stone quarries. However, till date the district administration failed implemented the High Court's order.

The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court has interfered in various proceedings such as obtaining injunctions and lifting of injunctions in respect of stone quarries operating in Pudukkottai district from 2021 to 2024. In particular, the court has been both harsh and lenient in the proceedings related to illegal mining of stone quarries. Therefore, the High Court should not evade the issue of illegal mining of stone quarries in future.

#### **4. Powers of the Panchayat Under the control of the quarry**

Ground water has been affected in Valayanvayal village and Thulaiyanur panchayat areas where R.R. Kalquarry is operational. The environment has been depleted, the Government poramboke lands where cattle and goats enter for grazing have been illegally acquired by stone quarries. They have also created fake groups in the name of women self help groups and obtained quarry liscence. The quarry owner keep the village panchayat under their control

and Ramaiah's wife Azhagu, who owns a stone quarry, continues to be the president of the panchayat.

### **5. Jagabar Ali's premeditated murder**

The quarry owners approached EHRD Jagabar Ali and tried to negotiate a compromise by paying up to Rs 1 crore. When the EHRD refused they issued death threats in various ways. Regarding this the EHRD personally complained to Thirumayam Police Station Inspector and District Superintendent of Police Smt. Vandita Pandey. The EHRD met the District Collector, Thirumayam Tahsildar and District Assistant Director of Mineral Resources Department and lodged a complaint against illegal mining. But none of them failed to initiate any action.

The EHRD Jacobar Ali was cautious and self-protective. In particular, he recorded everything he spoke to on his cell phone. Wherever he went, he kept the video on his mobile phone. It was in these circumstances the murder of the EHRD Jabagar Ali was planned.

On 17.1.2015 at about 2.10 PM, the HRD went to offer namaz at the mosque in Vengalur and he was returning Hollow Block manufacturing site on a two-wheeler (TN 55 AM 5234). Enroute at Ramandlaksh Rice Mill, the Driver of Vehicle Bearing No. TN 74 AV 5628 Mr. Kavi Anandan rammed the tipper lorry onto the EHRD's vehicle from an opposite direction. Due which the EHRD sustained injuries and fell into the road side ditch. The EHRD took out his phone to tried record the presence of owner of Arjun Tipper Service Mr. Muruganatham who came on a two wheeler and called the driver Kasi Anandan and fled from the spot.

### **Recommendations**

- A. In Tamil Nadu, when human rights defenders are murdered or tortured in custody, the Tamil Nadu government announces a CB-CID inquiry and remains silent. The Tamil Nadu government has done the same thing in the murder of EHRD Jabakar Ali. The indifference of top government officials and the support from some of the ruling opposition parties in the assassination of Jabakar Ali is implicit. Therefore, we request the Hon'ble Chief Minister to express his opinion and take immediate action.
- B. In Pudukkottai district, several cases have been pending before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court since 2021. The persons who are accused in this murder of EHRD have used the court to continue their illegal activities by obtaining orders/restraining orders since 2022. The High Court had also ordered in September 2023 prohibiting all quarry operations. Hence, The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court should take suo motu cognizance of the murder case of EHRD, who believed in

court and approached it to stop the illegal mining in Pudukkottai district. Just as the Sathankulam case where suo motu cognizance has been taken by the Madras High Court, the government has taken suo motu cognizance of murder of EHRD. In this context of the involvement of officials and police officials in this conspiracy, the case, which has now been transferred to the CBCID, has not even been registered by CBCID till date. This case needs to be handed over to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed by the High Court under the charge of Inspector General (IG) rank officer. The Human Rights Defenders Alert calls for the High Court to appoint investigating officers and monitor the investigation.

- C. From 17.1.2025 to 18.1.2025, the EHRD's body has been kept at Thirumayam Government Hospital, which does not have air-conditioning to keep the dead bodies safely. The EHRD's body has been kept there transferring it to Pudukkottai Government Medical College Hospital which is about 20 km away from Thirumayam. The family members of EHRD has also rented a freezer box from a private lender and preserved the body of EHRD.
- D. The EHRD's body was examined on 18.1.2025 with the help of an ortho doctor and pharmacist in a hospital where there was no facility for autopsy. They also forced the victim's family members not to record the video during the autopsy. Even after several days of postmortem, the victim's family has not been provided postmortem report. This has strengthened the suspicion that a complete autopsy report will never be published. Therefore, it is recommended that the State Government should order a re-examination of EHRD's body and take action.
- E. After Premedicated murder of EHRD Jabakar Ali, the driver Kasi Anandan has not surrender at the Thirumayam police station. We suspect that the owner of the lorry, Muruganantham, initially surrendered at Thirumayam, The Advocates and conspirators of premediated murder have met the Thirumayam police inspector. Therefore, all the CCTV recordings recorded at Thirumayam police station on 17.1.2025 and 18.1.2025 should be preserved. Also, all CCTV footage should be provided to Jabakar Ali's family for court proceedings. Inspector of Police M Gunasekaran of Thirumayam police station also needs to be questioned and his mobile has been seized.

- F. The EHRD has filed a complaint against illegal mining to Superintendent of Police Vandita Pandey, former District Collector Mercy Ramya IAS, present Collector Aruna IAS, Lalitha Assistant Director of Geology and Mining demanding action against illegal stone quarrying. The EHRD met Thirumayam tahsildar and Lakshmanan, who was working as an assistant to the District Collector, and lodged a complaint all of these complains have been filed from 24.12.2024 to 10.01.2025 before being murdered. But no action was taken.
- G. Government officials have been negligent even though they know that there is a danger to the EHRD who protects natural resources. Therefore, we confidently suspect that they are directly or indirectly responsible for the death of EHRD. Therefore, we recommend that they be criminally prosecuted.
- H. Illegal quarries have been operating in Thirumayam area for many years. There is no distinction between the ruling party and the opposition in this act. All parties are directly or indirectly supportive of it. This is why people like Jabakar Ali, who work with the noble intention of conserving mineral wealth, are being systematically targetted and murdered. Jabakar Ali, who was murdered, has filed several cases in the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court. Therefore, the High Court should take suo motu cognizance of this case to protect its conscience and dignity and to protect the lake, agricultural lands and water lands. It is recommended that the Judicial Magistrate should visit the R.R. Quarry and take steps to prevent illegal quarrying and to protect the water bodies.
- I. In order to protect the water bodies and to protect the mineral resources the EHRD met with authorities, lodged complaints, conducted peaceful protests and filed many litigations in the High Court against the illegal quarrying activities with his own money without any expectation. The work of EHRD Jabakar Ali is truly commendable.
- J. The premeditated murder of EHRD was the result of the involvement of top government officials in the conspiracy of the illegal stone quarry gang as he fought to protect the mineral wealth. Therefore, we recommend the Government of Tamil Nadu to pay minimum amount of Rs.1 crore as compensation to the EHRDs family.
- K. The conspirators of murder of EHRD are not only from very rich political backgrounds, but they have looted the revenue of at least Rs 850 crores which was due to the government. Therefore, we are afraid that they might caused further harm to Jabakar

Ali's family. So under the Witness Protection Scheme 2018, Jabakar Ali's family and his brothers A Raja Mohammed Ali and Zakir Hussain needs to be protected (CCTV, Direct Security, Witness Scheme fund).

L. The EHRDs three children are studying and their education should not be affected for any reason. It is recommended that the Tamil Nadu government should take immediate responsibility for the education expenses of Izzat Mublisha (17), Ijat Jamila (15) and Abdul Rafiq Karim (12).

M. Attacks and killings against human rights defenders are on the rise in Tamil Nadu.

- i. On 10.09.2022 Farmer and EHRD Karur Kuppam Jaganathan was murdered for closing an illegal sand quarry by the quarry owners.
- ii. In 2022, the EHRD Chennimalai Tamilselvan attacked by mercenaries for demanding action against illegal stone quarries.
- iii. In 2022, the EHRD Mani was killed by a tipper lorry at Kavalkinaru in Tirunelveli district and the murderers tried to coverup as an accident.
- iv. Last year, on 12.05.2024, there was an attempt to hit a farmer and EHRD Vengalapalayam Natarajan by a vehicle at Uthukuli in Tirupur district.
- v. Last month, EHRD Gnanasekaran of Kachaikatti in Vadipatti taluk of Madurai district was attacked by stone quarry goons.
- vi. 17.01.2025, at Thirumayam, Pudukkottai the EHRD Jabakar Ali was murdered for forcing action against illegal mineral mafia.

N. When a student of Anna University was victimized, the BNS Act was amended and the punishment was made stricter. Similarly, it is recommended that a special law for the protection of human rights defenders should be enacted to protect human rights defenders.