



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 February 2017

English only

Human Rights Council

Thirty-fourth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Tourner la page, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 February 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-03004(E)



* 1 7 0 3 0 0 4 *

Please recycle



Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of peaceful assembly and association*

Jallikattu

Jallikattu a.k.a. ‘YeruThaluvudhal (embracing the Bull)’ is a traditional Bull embracing sport that has been happening in the Tamil geographical region for more than 4000 years (per prominent evidences from Indus valley civilization coins, Tamil literature). The Bulls used for this sport are a native breed found only in the state of Tamilnadu, India. The Bulls are made to run a specified distance where the player tries to embrace the hump of the bull, clings on to it for a distance of 20 meters, if successful, the player is declared winner, else the bull is declared as winner and prizes distributed. The sport is being seen as a breed science where the winning bulls are taken for mating and the rest for field ploughing and other routine harmless domestic work complying with their anatomy.

Politics and Economic Background

The sport is the only motivation for the bull guardians to raise them which has now become void due to ban imposed by recently amended act of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals act by the Government of India. Entire population of TamilNadu, the provincial authority feels this move as a blatant blow to preservation of indigenous cattle. In the recent decade, the indigenous cattle breeds are dwindling and this ban is creating more alarming situation. The loss of such indigenous cattle swindles local economy by creation of dependency on other developed economies for artificial insemination. Milk from hybrid cattle also impose severe threats to people on widespread hamper on health, disorders that again captures pharmaceutical reign of the region.

PCA Act

Per recent amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to include Bull on the list of wild animals and in the prohibited performing animal category, the apex court in the nation has upheld the Ban on the Jallikattu sport. The law which is absolute necessity for other animals does not quite fit for Bulls that has become a domestic animal several centuries back. The inclusion of Bull in the list and ban of sport has come down hard on the Rights and Tradition of Tamil. The law has directly come hard on the Rights of Tamil community and indirectly has paved way towards economical threats as well.

JalliKattu Protests and Human Rights Violation

The Pro Jallikattu protests erupted in TamilNadu in a leaderless, apolitical, peaceful format that lasted for around 15 days from 8th January 2017 to January 23rd January 2017. The protests involving ~2.5 million(peak volume) on the streets, primarily targeting the removal of ban had slowly spread its vision on safeguarding culture, interests, tradition, indigenous economy and other pending rights that are to be granted for the region. The protests of this kind organized across various cities and other prominent towns, villages in the State of TamilNadu in the Indian union are unprecedented in world with so much peace, coordination, focus and democratic modus operandi except for the fateful oppression and forceful eviction, violation of Human Rights staged by the provincial authorities in the last two days.

The Protests

The sport faced ban for two years and the efforts were on through political means to resolve the same by repealing the PCA amendment. The political ways to resolve the issue failed once more and on the eve of Tamil festival Pongal, 2017 the sport still could not be conducted per law.

A peaceful protest rally was organized on Sunday, the 8th of January 2017 in Marina beach, Chennai, India by a handful of youngsters to create awareness on loss of Right on the grounds of Tamil tradition, threat to loss of indigenous cattle and economic sabotage.

As political efforts failed and Jallikattu could not be reinstated by amendment of law, during the Pongal (harvest) festival celebration – January 14 to 17th of January, the protest vibe picked up pace and started to spread like wildfire on a peaceful mode. Thousands took to streets of TamilNadu, especially the students. A huge gathering started to happen in Marina beach, Chennai, central park/grounds. All those gathered insisted on their solidarity to bring back the sport, the Right of the Tamil tradition.

Unprecedented peaceful protests broke out throughout the province forcing the government to take immediate political steps to reinstate the sport. The people gathered put up a great show without leaders, chief coordinators, devoid of political identities and stayed on protest places day and night. The protesters ensured best of discipline, cooperation to the Police authorities, safety of women, children and adequate supply of food and water to the protest venues. There were no reports of any incident, mishap throughout the days of protest in any of the places.

The protests received international attention with Tamils all over the world expressing solidarity to save the Rights of Tamil.

The protest requests were unanimous on reinstallation of Jallikattu event legally, not giving up on Cultural Right, protecting the indigenous cattle breeds and thereby ensuring domestic economy and livelihood of farmers in the province.

Government Action

Following fierce protests, the provincial government with the help of central government passed Ordinance on 22nd January 2017 followed by law amendment in legislative assembly on 23rd January 2017 to legalize the sport and implementation of the event. The law was a temporary solution and could be challenged anytime at the apex court to disqualify the act passed by provincial government.

Oppression and Human Rights Violation

The protesters resisted to disperse after ordinance on 22nd January 2017 and requested for permanent solution as they have had experiences in the past on failure to implement the sport. On 23rd January 2017, the Police battalions started forceful eviction of peaceful protesters. The protesters pleaded for a four hour deadline to disperse and the same was not entertained as well.

For groups of youngsters across places who held the protests with greatest dignity was treated ill, oppressed and handed over with heavy physical abuses by the authorities.

The police forces cornered the protesters towards the sea, man handled women, children. The fishermen community nearby who protected the youngsters from getting beaten up by the police was also marred with violence by the authorities.

Several students were attacked brutally. Hundreds have suffered injuries and the same has been concealed by the authorities. There are video footages that show Police in uniform who have beaten up women, children and youngsters.

Few of the lady cops have sown phosphor flammables on huts and have torched them. Sporadically, cops in uniform have torched numerous vehicles, damaged them with lathi blows. There are evidences that conspicuously demonstrate on how the authorities churned out violent scenes from a silent protest.

There are reports of serious Human Right violations which are to be taken by the relevant in-house agencies. The bloodshed, violence staged by police in an organized fashion has been one of ruthless incidents recorded in the province

in the recent years. Further, the police and the state have accused the protestors as anti-nationals and as people having connections with the militants and Maoists without any substantial evidence. More than 95% of the protestors were innocent students who braved the rough weather for days to protect their traditional rights.

We urge that the UNHRC should ask

- The government to take steps in ensuring that the Right of Tamils is protected.
- Human Rights violation need to be seriously analyzed, necessary compensation need to be given for the victims, actions need to be initiated on cops damaging public property and inflicting violence on the protestors.
- The right to peaceful assembly and association must be protected by the concerned state
- The state should not suppress the rights of the people to peacefully assemble and raise their concerns

References

Compilation of Violence inflicted by Cops, Human Rights violation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diAX-Vtq0ZA>

Interview of affected people

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqA5N8oueTg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwbvdOP4e3g>

*Naam Tamilar Katchi (Tamil Nadu), NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.