



CrI.O.P(MD)No.1534 of 2026

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 28.01.2026

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE L.VICTORIA GOWRI

CrI.O.P(MD)No.1534 of 2026
& CrI.M.P(MD)No.1695 of 2026

- 1.Kannan
- 2.Maruthamutu
- 3.Panjan
- 4.Karthick
- 5.Periyasamy
- 6.Senthilmurugan
- 7.Nagaraj
- 8.Kannan
- 9.Maruthupandi
- 10.Dhanalakshmi
- 11.Ramuthai
- 12.Dhanalakshmi
- 13.Sarasvathi
- 14.Chitra
- 15.Navaneethakrishnan
- 16.Hariharan
- 17.Maruthammal
- 18.Parameshwari
- 19.Rani
- 20.Tamilselvi
- 21.Chinnappillai

... Petitioners

Vs.



Crl.O.P(MD)No.1534 of 2026

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep.by the Sub Inspector of Police,
Reddiyarchatram Police Station,
Dindigul District.
(Crime No.125/2016)

2.Vellaiyammal

...Respondents

Prayer: Criminal Original Petition is filed under Section 528 of BNSS, 2023, to call for the records in STC No.61 of 2018 on the file of the Judicial Magistrate, Oddanchatram and quash the same.

For Petitioner : Mr.P.Manikandan

For Respondent : Mr.B.Thanga Aravindh (R1)
Government Advocat(Crl.Side)

ORDER

This Criminal Original Petition has been filed under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, invoking the inherent jurisdiction of this Court, seeking to call for the entire records relating to the impugned charge sheet in STC No.61 of 2018 on the file of the Judicial Magistrate, Oddanchatram and to quash the same as illegal.



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2. The case of the prosecution, as reflected in the charge sheet is that on 19.06.2016, the petitioners had obstructed Dindigul-Palani main road in Balamrajakkapatti Busstand and held a protest, thereby causing disturbance to general public and traffic. After completion of investigation, charge sheet has been filed in STC No.61 of 2018 on the file of the Judicial Magistrate, Oddanchatram. Seeking quashment of the same this Criminal Original Petition is filed.

3. The petitioners contend that the impugned FIR suffers from fundamental illegality and does not disclose the commission of any cognizable offence. The petitioners submit that the campaign was conducted peacefully and that right of expression is a constitutionally guaranteed right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. It is their case that expressing one's views in a democratic nation cannot be criminalised unless the act satisfies the ingredients of a penal provision.



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4. The learned counsel for the petitioners submitted that the FIR does not contain any specific overt act attributable to any of the petitioners. The complaint does not disclose an unlawful assembly and the petitioners along with others, had gathered for a purposeful protest. Therefore, the essential ingredients of Section 143 of IPC is not maintainable. He further submitted that insofar as Section 188 of IPC, there is no proof to show that any disobedience causes or risks causing obstruction, annoyance, injury, riot, or danger to human life, health, or safety. Insofar as Section 341 of IPC is concerned, there is no proof to show that the petitioners have voluntarily obstructed the public.

5. It is further argued that the allegations in the charge sheet are vague, sweeping and intended only to portray a peaceful assembly as illegal. Criminal law cannot be invoked to curtail peaceful expression, which is the bedrock of democratic governance.



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6. Per contra, the learned Government Advocate (Criminal Side) appearing for the respondent police submitted that the respondent police registered the FIR at the time of the petitioners conducting the protest. According to him, the petitioners have an effective remedy of participating in the investigation rather than seeking quashing at this stage.

7. I have considered the submissions of both sides and perused the materials placed on record. A careful reading of the FIR reveals that no specific overt act has been attributed to the petitioners. There is no allegation of violence, obstruction, public nuisance or disturbance. For a simple offence, the petitioner was charged for serious offences under Sections 143, 341 and 188 of IPC.

8. Article 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantee freedom of speech and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly without arms. These rights can be restricted only by reasonable restrictions provided by law. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has consistently held that peaceful protest is a recognized democratic right,



and criminal prosecution cannot be launched unless the alleged act squarely falls within the ingredients of a penal offence.

9. The ingredients of Sections 143, 341 and 188 of IPC are not made out in the FIR. Criminal law cannot be invoked on vague and omnibus allegations, particularly when the allegations seek to criminalise peaceful expression. The present FIR appears to have been registered mechanically and without application of mind.

10. In view of the authoritative pronouncements cited by the petitioner, and considering the facts of the present case, this Court finds that the continuation of the investigation against the petitioner would amount to abuse of process of law.

11. Accordingly, this Court is inclined to exercise its inherent powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973 (corresponding provision of Section 528 of BNSS) to secure the ends of justice.



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12. In the result, the Criminal Original Petition is allowed. The charge sheet in STC No.61 of 2018 on the file of the Judicial Magistrate, Oddanchatram is quashed insofar as the petitioners are concerned. Consequently, the connected miscellaneous petition is closed.

28.01.2026

NCC : Yes / No
Index : Yes / No
Internet : Yes/ No
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L.VICTORIA GOWRI, J.

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To

- 1.The Sub Inspector of Police,
Reddiyarchatram Police Station,
Dindigul District.
- 2.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

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