

URGENT ACTION

DALIT FOLK SINGER RELEASED ON BAIL

Dalit folk singer and activist S Sivadas, popularly known by his stage name Kovan, was released on bail on 16 November. He was arrested over two satirical songs which criticized the Tamil Nadu state government and chief minister. Amnesty International's campaign for him was highlighted in several media reports in India, and may have contributed to raising awareness about his arbitrary detention.

On 16 November, a court in Chennai granted bail to **Kovan**. The Judge ordered him to appear before the Investigation Officer when required.

Kovan was arrested at his house by the Tamil Nadu police on 30 October over the lyrics of two songs, '*Moodu Tasmac Moodu*' and '*Ooruku oru Sarayam*'. The songs, whose videos were uploaded to the internet, call for the Tamil Nadu government to close government-run alcohol shops in the state. A line in one of the songs says that the state chief minister was rejoicing while people were dying from alcoholism.

Kovan heads the cultural wing of the People's Art and Literary Association (Makkal Kalai Ilakkiya Kazhagam), a 30-year-old group in Tamil Nadu which performs folk songs and street plays on socio-economic issues.

Many thanks to everyone who took action. We will continue to monitor the situation, but no more action is required from the UA Network.

This is the first update of UA 249/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa20/2790/2015/en/>

Name: S Sivadas aka Kovan

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 249/15 Index: ASA 20/2897/2015 Date: 18 November 2015

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