

## Sterlite firing: Madras HC says officials acted in tandem with industrialist's wishes

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The Madras High Court, on Monday, July 15, has ordered a probe into the assets of the 21 officials named by the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission's report pertaining to the 2018 Thoothukudi firing that killed 13 persons. The Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) is entrusted with the investigation. A bench of justices SS Sundar and N Senthilkumar made the oral remarks while hearing a petition filed by human rights activist Henry Tiphagne seeking court to direct the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to reopen the case.

The bench also pulled up the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for giving a clean chit to the officials named in the report and expressed their displeasure by saying that the CBI acted in tandem with the officials and ignored police high handedness. The court also [observed](#), "Voiceless people were at the receiving end, the persons in helm of affairs could not tolerate the prolonged, peaceful stir; and one industrialist wanted to teach a lesson and the officials acted accordingly".

The court further directed the DVAC to submit a preliminary report containing details of the assets of the officials, their spouses and close relatives, within two weeks.

In 2018, several residents of Thoothukudi had gathered peacefully to demand the shutting down of Sterlite Copper. The civil protest that went on for about 100 days ended in unprecedented violence and led to open firing by the police, which resulted in the death of 14 people, including that of 17-year-old Snowlin Jackson. The police fired on the protesters for two successive days on May 22 and 23, 2018, injuring more than 100 people.

The police and other officials had earlier claimed that the shooting was an act of self defence, but Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission's report held 17 police personnel, a District Collector and three Deputy Tahsildars responsible for the Thoothukudi firing.

The CBI initially submitted its report in December 2023 naming only one - inspector R Thirumalai, as responsible for the shooting. Further, the original charges in the FIR were deleted and minor provisions were invoked. The court [rejected](#) the report and ordered to conduct another one, the report of which was [submitted](#) a month ago, which is yet to be taken up by the court.

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/tamil-nadu/sterlite-firing-madras-hc-says-officials-acted-in-tandem-with-industrialists-wishes>