

## 2018 Thoothukudi firing: Supreme Court stays Tamil Nadu probe into civil servants' assets

On July 15, the Madras High Court said that the state government should investigate whether the officials involved in the incident had made monetary gains.

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The [Supreme Court](#) on Friday stayed an investigation by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption into the assets of civil servants who were posted at Thoothukudi during the 2018 Sterlite police firing, *Bar and Bench* reported.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud with Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also sought a response from the Tamil Nadu government and the National Human Rights Commission in the matter.

[Thirteen protestors](#) were killed in the police firing on May 22, 2018, causing national outrage and the subsequent closure of the plant. The demonstrators had alleged that the Sterlite Copper plant contaminated the region's air and water resources.

Sterlite Copper owned the copper smelter. It was a subsidiary of the Vedanta Group, one of the world's largest mining and metals conglomerates.

In 2021, activist Henri Tiphagne filed a petition in the Madras High Court challenging the National Human Rights Commission's closure of its investigation into the incident.

While hearing the matter on July 15, the Madras High Court said that the state government should probe whether the [officers involved in the incident](#) had made monetary gains.

The High Court bench of Justices SS Sundar and N Senthil Kumar also remarked verbally that it believed that the police firing outside the copper plant was carried out by authorities at the [behest of "one industrialist"](#).

"We want to know where their current assets stand at," the court had said, according to *Bar and Bench*. "One of the protestors was shot less than seven kilometres from the collector's office. We suspect some of the police officials have let the firing happen out of an agenda."

The High Court had directed the state's Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption to investigate the assets of all officials, including officers of the Indian Police Service and the Indian Administrative Service, who were stationed in Thoothukudi at that time and named as respondents in the case being heard.

The High Court had said that it should be informed about the [assets owned](#) by the officers, their spouses and close relatives during the two years before and two years after the incident.

The department was asked to submit an initial report within two weeks.

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