

2018 Sterlite Firing: Madras High Court Accuses Police of Acting on Behalf of Industrialist

July 15, 2024

Madras High Court Alleges Police Collusion in 2018 Sterlite Firing, Orders Probe into Officer Assets

The [Madras High Court](#) has accused the police of acting under the influence of a particular industrialist during the 2018 Sterlite copper plant firing in Thoothukudi, which resulted in the deaths of 13 unarmed protestors.



Court Questions Police Motives and Orders Investigation

A Bench of Justices SS Sundar and N Senthil Kumar expressed that the incident appeared to be a pre-determined act orchestrated by authorities on the orders of an industrialist. The Court raised concerns over whether officers involved in the firing received monetary gains and instructed the Tamil Nadu government to investigate.

Investigate Assets of Involved Officers

The Court directed the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to probe the assets of IPS and IAS officers posted in Thoothukudi at the time. The DVAC was instructed to examine assets not just in the officers' names but also those of their spouses and close relatives, covering the period from two years before to two years after the incident.

Context of the Protest

The protest in 2018 was against the Sterlite copper plant, a Vedanta Limited unit, which was accused of causing environmental harm. The Sterlite plant was India's largest copper smelter before its closure in 2018. Protestors were demanding the plant's shutdown due to environmental concerns.

Reopening the Probe

The Court was hearing a petition filed by activist Henri Tiphagne, challenging the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) decision to close its probe into the incident on October 25, 2018. Tiphagne's 2021 petition sought the reopening of the investigation.

High Court's Directive

Highlighting the need for transparency, the Court emphasized the importance of assessing the assets of respondent officers and suspected an agenda behind the police actions. It ordered the DVAC to submit a preliminary report within two weeks.

https://thecourtroom.in/2018-sterlite-firing-madras-high-court-accuses-police-of-acting-on-behalf-of-industrialist/#google_vignette