



## 2018 Thoothukudi Sterlite police firing | DVAC to inquire if assets were accumulated by police and revenue officials before and after the incident

Madras High Court wants to know if there was any quid pro quo that led to the firing; DVAC ordered to submit its report by July 29

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The Madras High Court on Monday directed the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti Corruption (DVAC) to conduct an inquiry regarding the assets of police and revenue personnel involved in the 2018 Thoothukudi Sterlite police firing, in which 13 protesters were shot dead, and submit a report before the court on July 29.



A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Sundar and N. Senthilkumar ordered that the assets procured by the individuals in their names and those of their spouses and other close relatives at least two years prior to the police firing as well as two years after the incident must be collated and submitted before the court.

During the course of hearing of the case, Justice Sundar said: “All this happened because one industrialist wanted this to happen. He wanted to teach a lesson to everyone and therefore, he made it happen and you all people (revenue as well as police personnel) actually acted only for him.”

The judge expressed serious dissatisfaction over the investigation conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the police firing and the charge sheet filed by it against just one Inspector of Police before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) in Madurai in December 2023.

Though the CJM had refused to accept the charge sheet and ordered further investigation, the CBI had reverted in June this year and re-submitted the same charge sheet by stating “the further investigation did not reveal criminality on the part of any public servant warranting filing of any supplementary charge sheet.”

Expressing disappointment over such a report filed before the CJM, the senior judge in the Bench said: “The CBI has actually failed. Is this the way in which you conduct investigation? No court will accept this. You are now hand in glove with the people who are respondents (the police and revenue officials) here.”

Though the CBI had concluded the police firing against the anti-Sterlite protesters was not pre mediated and that the police personnel had to open fire only as a last resort, the Division Bench said, there were certain materials to doubt the conclusion arrived at by the investigating agency.

Justice Sundar wondered how did a protest that was conducted peacefully for nearly 100 days turned violent on the day of firing. Though it was claimed that the protesters attempted to vandalise the Collectorate, one of them had been shot dead at Therespuram located about seven kilometres away, he said.

Therefore, to find out the truth, the judges directed the DVAC to conduct an inquiry regarding the assets accumulated by the police as well as the revenue personnel two years before and after the firing incidents.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/2018-thoothukudi-sterlite-police-firing-dvac-to-inquire-if-assets-were-accumulated-by-police-and-revenue-officials-before-and-after-the-incident/article68407368.ece>