



Tamil Nadu

Sterlite firing: Madras HC says need to look into rights violations

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CHENNAI: The Madras High Court on Tuesday stated that the issue does not end with payment of compensation to victims, even as it is laudable on the part of the government, but human rights violations have to be ascertained before proceeding further against revenue and police officials in connection with the police firing on anti-Sterlite protestors in Thoothukudi in 2018.

A division bench of justices SS Sundar and N Senthilkumar made the remarks while hearing a public interest litigation petition filed by People's Watch executive director Henri Tiphagne, seeking a direction to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to reopen the probe into the firing which took the lives of 13 protesters.

The court had impleaded then Thoothukudi collector N Venkatesh, three revenue department officers and 17 police officers including then IG (south zone) Shailesh Kumar Yadav, DIG Kapil Kumar C Saratkar and SP Mahendran in the previous hearing, and directed them to file counter-affidavit.

Objecting to certain submissions by additional advocate general J Ravindran, appearing for the state, the bench said that the state's interest is well protected if it does not open its mouth. "We get the impression that you seem to be more interested in not serving the interests of the public," the bench stated.

The bench further stated that the matter does not end with compensation to the victims and the question is whether human rights violations were committed or not, adding that if there were violations, and if the bench made some observations, the parties concerned (impleaded officers) must be heard because such observations may affect them.

The counsel for CBI informed the court that an additional charge sheet has been filed, after holding further investigation, before the special court in Madurai as per the orders of the court which had rejected the original charge sheet. The bench adjourned the hearing to July 1.

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