

TAMIL NADU

## High Court summons Thoothukudi SP



STAFF REPORTER

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### **Petitioner alleges police highhandedness**

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday has summoned Thoothukudi Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha after a public interest litigation petition alleged clampdown by the police on anti-Sterlite protesters.

A Division Bench of Justices K.K. Sasidharan and P.D. Audikesavalu summoned Mr. Murali Rambha to appear before the court on January 30.

The court was hearing the PIL plea filed by S. Mohan of the People's Watch Organisation who alleged continuous clampdown by the police in Thoothukudi, including key witnesses in the firing case.

He pointed out that Santhosh Raj, a key witness in the Thoothukudi firing case, was recently picked up by the police and subjected to custodial torture.

Until he was picked up, no criminal case was registered against Santhosh Raj, who deposed before both the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission and the CBI for inquiry. False case has now been foisted against him, he said.

Police personnel in plainclothes took Santhosh Raj to the custody. He was threatened with dire consequences if he continued to associate with anti-Sterlite protests.

His arrest was not even intimated to his family members, the petitioner said.

The police have misused their powers by not following the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in the Arnesh Kumar case, D.K. Basu case and the existing NHRC guidelines.

Activists like Prince Cardoza and advocate Hari Raghavan have also been subjected to the clampdown measures. As a result, the residents of Thoothukudi have lost their freedom of movement, he charged.

Calling for an inquiry into the incident, the petitioner sought a compensation for the physical and mental stress suffered by Santhosh Raj. He also sought a direction to the District Legal Services Authority to appoint lawyers in police stations to ensure legal assistance and no violation of any right takes place, he said.