

Seshachalam encounter: JAACT appeals to NHRC to get stay order vacated

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Marking the 10th remembrance meeting of the families of the victims of 2015 Seshachalam encounter incident, the Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAACT) has appealed to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to intervene in the issue and render justice to the families of the victims.

In a press statement, JAACT legal advisor Henri Tiphagne said that in April 2015, labourers from Tamil Nadu were abducted, tortured and 20 persons were encountered in Seshachalam forest in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh by the Andhra Pradesh Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Special Task Force (STF) comprising police officers and forest personnel.

The NHRC took suo motu cognisance of the incident and issued notices to Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police of Andhra Pradesh to submit a detailed report. In May 2015, the NHRC directed the Andhra Pradesh government to

pay ₹5 lakh as interim relief to the families of each of the 20 persons killed by the STF personnel. The authorities were directed to take steps to disburse financial assistance to the families of 13 victims who belonged to Scheduled Tribe. The NHRC also recommended a CBI probe.

In June 2015, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary filed a petition before the Andhra Pradesh High Court challenging the direction of the NHRC. The High Court ordered an interim stay of the directions.

Mr. Henri Tiphagne said that 10 years after the incident the interim stay had not been vacated and the proceedings before the High Court were still pending. The JAACT appealed to the NHRC to get the stay order vacated and ensure that the directions of the commission were implemented. The JAACT requested the NHRC to intervene before the relevant court by exercising the power under Section 12(b) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, on behalf of the victims and their families, it said.