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Manjolai families seek samthuvapuram, not housing complex

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Madurai: Families in Manjolai are ready to relocate but have urged the state govt to consider establishing a samathuvapuram (Periyar memorial equality village) instead of moving them to a multi-storeyed housing complex in Reddiarpatti, Tirunelveli. This was stated by People's Watch executive director Henri Tiphagne and high court advocate Robert Chandra Kumar at a press meet in Madurai on Saturday.

Robert Chandra Kumar said Supreme Court had taken up the case regarding rehabilitation of Manjolai residents. "Most of the people are agriculturists and livestock rearers. The proposed rehabilitation site near Tirunelveli city consists of a multi-floor

apartment complex, which is unsuitable for people with cattle and agricultural livelihoods. What we seek is a samathuvapuram model, where these families can live with dignity and continue their way of life," he said.

Henri Tiphagne said there are about 500 families. "The govt must listen to their plea and ensure that resettlement happens with full dignity. The villagers have demanded a compensation package of ₹25 lakh per family to help them restart their lives," he added.

Later, Tiphagne expressed concern over downgrading of India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) from 'A' to 'B' status by Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) citing various factor. They

include political interference in appointments, lack of pluralism in its composition, appointment of police officers as investigators in human rights cases among other things.

"The downgrading is a serious warning to India. The NHRC must urgently undertake reforms to regain its credibility, independence, and effectiveness," Tiphagne said.