

## Thoothukudi firing: 'Unable to digest' says Madras HC; grants three months for DVAC to probe assets of 21 officers

The court blamed the CBI for "shockingly failing" to bring to the fore the truth behind the shooting and termed the Central agency's investigation report "unrealistic" and "unreliable" as it has failed in its mission.

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CHENNAI: Saying that the police officers, responsible for the firing on the 'unarmed' Anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi in 2018, be made to feel the pinch, the Madras High Court on Monday granted three months time for the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to hold a 'fair and transparent' investigation into the assets of these 21 officers and

submit a report to the court.

A division bench of Justices SS Sundar and N Senthilkumar passed the interim orders granting time to DVAC as sought while hearing a petition filed by Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, seeking orders to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to reopen the inquiry into the firing which snuffed out life of 13 protesters.

The bench also asked the concerned department secretaries and the DGP to provide "cooperation" to the director of DVAC to hold "fair, transparent and independent" inquiry to find out the assets acquired by the Police and the Revenue department officers named in the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission report and their family members- two years before and two years after the firing.

Saying that the bench does not have 'any particular interest' in the case, it mentioned that it is concerned about "preventing recurrence" of such incidents in the future because the protesters were 'chased' by the police personnel when they were running off to save their life out of fear. "The people were targeted. We are unable to digest these kind of things happen. The police will go to any extent. We haven't heard of this," the bench noted.

Criticising the attitude of compensating loss of lives with money and then closing the case, it asked, "Then what justice is there (for the victims)?" "They (police) were armed but the people were totally unarmed. After the firing incident, they were threatened with a warning of further shooting," the bench added.

The court blamed the CBI for "shockingly failing" to bring to the fore the truth behind the shooting and termed the Central agency's investigation report "unrealistic" and "unreliable" as it has failed in its mission.

The court also slammed Sterlite Copper for running without consent (of the government authorities concerned) from 2009 to 2014, causing pollution. "One individual is capable of directly controlling every system, which is bad to the society and the common people. This is what we are trying to do away with," the court said.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2024/Jul/29/thoothukudi-firing-unable-to-digest-says-madras-hc-grants-three-months-for-dvac-to-probe-assets-of-21-officers>