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# People's Watch gives detailed account of Tuticorin police cruelty, wants CM to close Sterlite plant



Covai Post Network



May 23, 2018



**Chennai** : People's Watch, a programme unit of the Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns, wants Chief Minister Edappadi Palanisamy to issue orders for immediate closure of the Sterlite Copper Smelter Part No 1 and stoppage of construction second plant.

The inaction of Chief Minister during the 100-day Tuticorin Sterlite protest resulted in the death of a dozen innocent people and caused heavy damage to properties.

As People's Watch monitored the protest, after due notification to the Superintendent of Police, it witnessed several lath charges against protesters. As the growing numbers of protesters approached from various sides, the police force even turned to guard the Collectorate.

The lath charge fuelled the wrath as the protesters began in a peaceful manner and were joined by disabled and transgender people. But things soon started getting violent as a result of the police shooting at the Collectorate. The protesters forced entry into the compound and collected petrol from various vehicles and set ablaze nearly 20 cars and bikes which in turn led to chaos. Protesters even turned against each other blaming them to be policemen in mufti.

The Tamil Nadu Government, which was given a choice to either stand by its people or by a copper industry, chose the industry instead. People's Watch said it witnessed the peaceful assembly of nearly 2 lakh protesters in Tuticorin on March 22. It wanted to know why the State failed to take pointers from that protest.

People's Watch has demanded suo moto inquiry to be conducted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) into the brutal use of police force at the protest on May 22, Rs 20 lakh as compensation to the family of those killed during protest and an immediate order to stop all the continuing police excesses in Tuticorin.