

# Sterlite case police firing 'scar on democracy': Madras HC

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CHENNAI: Asserting that the 2018 police firing on anti-Sterlite protestors in Tuticorin was a scar on the face of our democracy, the Madras high court said citizens should not be fired at the behest of any corporate house.

"Also, the state should consider a realistic quantum of compensation for either category, apart from others who suffered injuries," the court said on certain measures suggested by the [National Human Rights Commission](#)(NHRC), including enhancing the compensation to the families of those who died and or were injured.

"If there is any indication that firing was resorted to on behalf of any corporate, it must be addressed," the first bench of chief justice Sanjib Banerjee and justice [P D Audikesavalu](#) said on Monday.

The court then directed the NHRC to report the steps taken to find a logical conclusion to the issue based on the report of its investigation division.

On the probe being conducted by the CBI, the bench said: "The matter should be brought to its logical end, as expeditiously as possible, to give a meaningful closure to it and the circumstances in which firing had to be resorted to against unarmed citizens must come out in the report." The state is requested to play the real parental role in providing counselling and psychiatric assistance to the members of the bereaved families, if necessary, the court added.

"The state must be seen to be with the families and not an adversary, despite whatever may

have happened. The state needs to walk the extra mile for such purpose and the learned Advocate-General is requested to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to assuage the feelings of the families of the victims" the judges said.

The directions were passed on a [PIL](#) moved by rights activist [Henri Tiphagne](#) seeking direction to the NHRC to reopen the probe and to furnish a report of the investigation.

Protests by locals against [Vedanta's](#) copper unit Sterlite over pollution concerns peaked on May 22, 2018, leading to violence that resulted in 13 deaths in police firing.