

'Encounters cannot be a part of social justice'

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Shooting down criminals could not be a part of social justice, said Henri Tiphagne, executive director of Madurai-based People's Watch.

Condemning the police encounter in Tiruvallur district in which two two history-sheeters were killed, Mr. Tiphagne told *The Hindu* on Thursday that in the present Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) regime, there had been 10 encounters since October 2021.

Wondering about the stoic silence maintained by the State Human Rights



Henri Tiphagne, executive director, People's Watch.
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Commission and the Tamil Nadu Legal Services Authority over these encounter killings, he appealed to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to intervene. The advocate said all established norms had been ignored by the Tamil Nadu Police. In ev-

ery encounter killing, he said, the parents were apprehensive of the possible killing of their wards in the hands of the police personnel. This should be viewed as a daring case of murder. The policemen figuring in these acts should be booked for murder under the Indian Penal Code.

When the Supreme Court had categorically directed that only a Judicial Magistrate should conduct the probe, the State government had reversed it by instructing the Revenue Divisional Officer to conduct an inquiry over such encounters.

Above all, the post-mortem should be conducted

in the presence of the family members and a copy/ video should be given to them as per the apex court directive. This too had been neglected, he charged.

He said there might be justification of their action by the enforcement authorities, but the need for prevention of extra judicial killings by the police was essential, Mr. Tiphagne said, adding that the State Human Rights Commission should have taken the case *suo motu*.

The advocate also said the people who had died in the encounter might have criminal records. "I am not going into those aspects.

But, killing is nowhere allowed under the law and is condemned," he added.

People's Watch released the names of those killed after the DMK came to power: Murthasa in Kancheepuram on October 10, 2021; Duraimurugan in Thoothukudi in October 2021; Dinesh and Mohideen in Chengalpattu in January 2022; Neeravi Murugan in Tirunelveli in March 2022; Vinoth alias 'Sotta' Vinoth and Ramesh in Chengalpattu in August 2023; Vishwa alias 'Kulla' Vishwa in Sriperambudur in September 2023; and Muthu Saravanan and Satish alias 'Sunday' Satish in Tiruvallur in October 2023.