

Activist blames NHRC for giving Sterlite case a silent burial

STAFF REPORTER

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Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, has blamed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for giving a silent burial to the case relating to the anti-Sterlite protest in May 2018 in which 13 people were killed in police firing.

Addressing the conference organised by People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) here on Sunday, he termed the closure as illegal and unjust.

Citing the closure report, he said NHRC was convinced of the State government's efforts to restore normalcy in Thoothukudi.

“Nothing could be farther from the truth,” he said.

Demanding NHRC to reopen the case and conduct a thorough investigation, he said that the option of approaching courts to get the case reopened will be explored otherwise.

K. Kanagaraj, member, State Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist), blamed Sterlite Copper for deploying arm-twisting tactics and using a well-oiled public relations machinery to reopen the plant.

A number of resolutions were passed in the conference, which included the unconditional withdrawal of cases filed against advocate Hari Raghavan and two others for distributing pamphlets against Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi, filing of murder cases against those officials involved in the firing in May 2018, and thorough investigation on the absence of Thoothukudi Collector on the day of the protest.

Importantly, the conference urged the State government to withdraw the government order issued last year for closure of Sterlite Copper, which, the conference termed, was weak, and instead take concrete and unshakeable steps to ensure that the plant was permanently closed.

