

Can you kill people & hush up with money? High court to Tamil Nadu

TNN | Jun 26, 2021, 08.50 AM IST



MADURAI: Three years after police allegedly gunned down 13 unarmed anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin, the Madras high court on Friday chastised the state for not booking anyone in the matter.

“Can we kill people and throw money at them and say that our job is done? Is that the society that we want to build? Just throwing money at some people and everything else is hushed up?” asked the first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice T S Sivagnanam.

“It is somewhat alarming that the state, through its police, fired at unarmed protesters and no one is booked three years after the incident. It may not augur well for a civilised society governed by the constitutional principles that we have to merely throw money at the families of the victims and give closure to an incident of possible brutality and excessive police action,” the CJI bench said and asked the state to spell out its stand on the issue.

Taking a serious view of the May 22, 2018 incident, the judges said that while the state had indeed remedied the nuisance that was created, the part with regard to

punishment still remained unanswered. The punishment part should also be answered to prevent occurrence of such incidents in future, the judges observed. Considering the importance of the matter, the judges said it would be heard by the principal seat in Chennai, and adjourned it to August 9. The court was hearing a petition filed by advocate Henri Tiphagne seeking a direction to the NHRC to reopen the police firing incident.

The bench pointed out that the National Human Rights Commission first took suo motu cognizance of the matter, but closed the proceedings in October 2018, saying no further investigation was required. The closure came apparently after Tamil Nadu government submitted a report stating that 'adequate compensation' had been paid to the kin of the victims, steps had been taken to restore normality and that a judicial commission was looking into the matter.

The NHRC had initially made observations like the right to life of victims had been grossly violated and that the police fired on unarmed protestors without following standard operating procedure. It had also called for various reports from authorities and sent its own team for spot investigations based on the order of the Delhi high court.

On Friday, Tamil Nadu advocate-general R Shunmugasundaram said Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission submitted an interim report before the government on May 14, 2021.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/can-you-kill-people-hush-up-with-money-high-court-to-tamil-nadu/articleshow/83863126.cms>