

Aruna commission records statements of 813 witnesses

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The Aruna Jagadeesan commission, probing the incidents leading to police firing on anti-Sterlite protestors in Thoothukudi in 2018, has after 28 sessions recorded the statements of 813 witnesses, said commission advocate Arul Vadivel Sekar.

Adding 300 more witnesses have been identified to be summoned, Sekar briefed the media in the presence of Justice Jagadeesan on Thursday that, so far, the commission had notified 1,127 documents. Among the 102 police officials, from constables to sub-inspectors, summoned for the 28th phase of the inquiry held for 10 days from July 5, 95 policemen appeared before the commission in person and gave their statements. The injured policemen submitted affidavits seeking compensation. The commission would recommend compensation for the policemen injured during the protest after examining the affidavits, said the advocate.

Human rights activist Henry Tiphange and retired IAS officer Devasagayam along with some more cops on duty on the fateful day in Thoothukudi would be summoned to give their statements in the next session scheduled for a week from August 23. The following sessions would take the statements of the Sterlite employees and their families at the company residential quarters that were set ablaze by the protestors and ballistic experts about handling of firearms. The doctors who performed autopsy of the victims' bodies and the forensic experts too would be summoned soon by the commission.

The advocate added that the commission would complete its task this year.

Responding to the media buzz that former chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswamy would be summoned, Sekar said that people identified to have direct connection with the tragedy on May 22 and 23, 2018 only would be summoned.