

Citing slow work, NGO says wind up panel's inquiry into Sterlite protest

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Madurai:

The Madurai based network towards human rights monitoring, 'People's Watch', has sought the new government in Tamil Nadu to immediately pass orders for the discontinuation of the inquiry commission led by retired Justice Aruna Jagadeesan into anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi since its terms of reference have not been completed even partly after three years when it has only held 111 days of hearings in its existence for 1,093 days.

Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director, People's Watch, in a statement on Saturday said at present pace there's no chance that the Commission will complete its main terms of reference in the next 24 months.

Continuing with such an important Commission and terms of reference with such lethargy would not auger well for the new government to reach at findings and recommendations that could bring justice to the people who engaged in the peaceful protest for the closure of Sterlite on May 22 in 2018. Every institution, which's expected under law to detect and investigate the culprits responsible for the opening of fire and use of violence on 22nd May, 2018 such as the Central Bureau of Investigation, the National Human Rights Commission and the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission of inquiry seem to have been functioning in collusion to ensure that there's no justice to state institutions responsible for the lives and property lost.

Further, he wished that the new government constitutes a fresh Commission of inquiry with a fresh terms of reference directly related to the police firing and use of force to be headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court and assisted by a team of High Court Judges and more retired District Judges if required to assist in the examination of witnesses and with the assurance to complete their work and submit their final report within six months of their constitution.

People's Watch also wishes to immediately ensure that the Government intervenes in the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court requesting to take over the monitoring of the CBI investigation ordered on 14th August, 2018 and asking the CBI to periodically report to the Court to ensure that the accused in the second CBI FIR (against officials) are named and the charge sheet laid within a period of 30 days.

It also demanded that in the absence of the CBI doing so, the Government should not hesitate to ask for the CBI investigation to be handed over to a specially constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) to be constituted by the High Court in consultation with the Government, Tiphagne said. Paying compensations and providing employment alone to the dependents of the deceased however could not deliver justice to the families of the 15 killed in the violence and the over 200 injured with simple and grievous injuries, he said.

<https://www.dtnext.in/News/TamilNadu/2021/05/23020022/1296105/Citing-slow-work-NGO-says-wind-up-panels-inquiry-into-.vpf>