

Madras High Court Expresses Distress Over 2018 Tuticorin Police Firing

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The Madras High Court on Monday expressed significant distress over the 2018 police firing in Tuticorin that resulted in the deaths of 13 anti-Sterlite protesters, stating it was "unable to digest" the actions taken against the demonstrators.

Justices S S Sundar and N Senthilkumar, during the hearing of a petition filed by social activist Henri Tiphagne, highlighted the severity of the response by law enforcement, which involved chasing and opening fire on fleeing protesters. The petition seeks to reopen the investigation into the incident, previously closed by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The bench emphasized the public interest aspect of the case, pointing out the threatening atmosphere created by the police, including house searches and a climate of fear among the community that discouraged victims from identifying themselves.

"Our vision is purely public interest," remarked the justices, voicing their concerns about the need to ensure such situations are not repeated. "The whole situation was controlled by a few individuals. The entire system is to protect the individuals," they added, indicating a potential misuse of power in handling the protests.

To further investigate the matter, the court has granted the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) three months to conduct an independent inquiry and report back. Additionally, the court has mandated cooperation from other relevant authorities with the DVAC during this investigation.

This directive follows a previous order from the bench that instructed the DVAC to examine the assets of all officers, including IPS and IAS officers, who were stationed in Tuticorin during the time of the incident.

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