

Bring a 'logical end' to 2018 anti-Sterlite protest case: HC

Taking a note that the CBI is also probing the case, the court said, "The matter should be brought to its logical end, as expeditiously as possible, to give a meaningful closure to the matter, and the circumstances in which firing had to be resorted to against unarmed citizens must come out in the report."

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The Madras high court on Monday said that the investigation into the police firing during anti-Sterlite protests in May 2018, that killed 13 persons in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district, should come to its logical end.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice TS Sivagnanam observed while hearing a plea, filed by Henri Tiphagne, executive director, People's Watch, a human rights organisation seeking directions for the National Human Right Commission's (NHRC) to reopen a probe into the matter. Tiphagne, in a previous hearing, had informed the court that the NHRC had closed the case in October 2018 since compensation was paid to the victims' family, and a judicial commission (retired justice Aruna Jagadeesan) was probing police excesses.

The police firing happened on the 100th day of the protests demanding permanent closure of the Vedanta-owned Sterlite copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi, alleging that it caused severe pollution. The NHRC had taken suo motu cognisance of the incident the following day. The previous AIADMK regime ordered the plant to shut, and Vedanta's plea for reopening is still pending before the Supreme Court.