

# Sterlite Protests- 'State Must Be Seen To Be With The Families, Not An Adversary': Madras HC Orders State To Provide Compensation, Assistance To Victims and Their Kin

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The **Madras High Court** on Monday issued a host of directions to the State government for the rehabilitation of the victims and their families of the 2018 incident of police firing that had followed the **Sterlite Protests** (May 28, 2021) in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu. The Court was adjudicating upon a [plea](#) moved by **Mr. Henri Tiphagne**, Executive Director of People's Watch seeking disclosure of

NHRC's 'undisclosed' 2018 investigation report on the incident of police firing on unarmed civilians protesting against Vedanta Sterlite's copper smelting plant at Thoothukudi.

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A Bench comprising **Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee** and **Justice TS Sivagnanam** observed on Monday that they had perused the report submitted by the NHRC in a sealed cover on the [previous date](#) of hearing.

*"The report will be sealed by an officer of this court and made over to the representative of learned Additional Solicitor-General. Learned Additional Solicitor-General is requested to make over copies of the report to learned Advocate-General and Mr. Henri Tiphagne, the petitioner appearing in person",* the Court directed.

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The Court took note of the recommendations made by the NHRC in its report and accordingly directed the State to implement them. It further ordered that the cases filed against the protestors must be dropped and that the institution of the cases should not stand in the way of the future prospects of any of the protestors to disqualify them from any employment or other opportunities that may be available.

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Furthermore, the Court observed that the NHRC in its report had stipulated various measures for providing compensation to the victims and accordingly directed the State to take appropriate measures to provide psychiatric counselling as well as monetary compensation to the bereaved families.

*"The NHRC has also suggested certain further measures, including enhancing the compensation to the families of those who died and to the persons who were severely injured and are impaired for life. The State should consider a realistic quantum of compensation for either category, apart from others who suffered injuries. The State is requested to play the real parental role in providing counselling and psychiatric assistance to the members of the bereaved families, if necessary. The State must be seen to be with the families and not an adversary, despite whatever may have happened. The State needs to walk the extra mile for such purpose and learned Advocate-General is requested to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to assuage the feelings of the families of the victims", the Court opined*