

MHC directs State to recover compensation paid to anti-Sterlite victims from officials

The bench also asked the State about the steps taken to recover

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CHENNAI: The Madras High Court directed the State to recover the compensation paid to the families of those who lost their loved ones in the 2017 anti-Sterlite protest firing, from the officials named in retired Justice Aruna Jagadeesan's commission.



Senior officials named by the commission are N Venkatesh (the then district collector of

Thoothukudi) Shailesh Kumar Yadav (then IG), Kapil Kumar C Saratkar (then DIG) P Mahendran (then SP, Thoothukudi) and B sekar (then deputy tahsildar, Thoothukudi).

A division bench comprising Justice SS Sundar and N Senthilkumar also directed the State that in every case of human rights violation, the compensation must be recovered from erring individuals.

The bench observed after the State submitted that the government paid Rs.25 lakh to the victim's families.

The bench wondered why should the State bear the cost for the individual's misdeeds, it is the public's money, hence the government is accountable for that, the bench opined.

The bench also asked the State about the steps taken to recover the compensation paid from the officials.

Further, the bench directed to recover the money from the officials from their salary, pension benefits, and even from their properties.

The petitioner Henri Tiphagne submitted that there is no progress in this case and action has been taken against only one official, a year ago.

After the submission, the bench posted the matter to March 27 for further arguments.

Henri Tiphagne filed a petition against an order passed by the National Human Rights Commission, on October 25, 2018, closing the suo motu proceedings initiated by it with regard to the Thoothukudi police firing, in which 13 anti-Sterlite protesters were shot and killed.

The activist sought to re-investigate the case on the basis of his complaint. Henri also implicated all the police personnel and public servants named in retired Justice Aruna Jagadeesan commission's report in compliance with the court's order.

Other government officials named by commission are Deputy superintendents of police R Lankathirumaran, Thirumalai, inspectors N Hariharan and T. Parthipan, sub inspectors, M Rennis and Sorna Mani, constables Raja, Thandavamoorthy. Mathivanan, M Kannan, Shankar, Satheesh Kumar, Sudalaikannu, A Raja along with M Kannan, formerly zonal deputy tahsildar and S Chandran then divisional excise officer in Thoothukudi.

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