

Press Statement by Arya Samaj Leader and Chairperson of Bandhua  
Mukti Morcha on Vedanta Plant - Swami Agnivesh

**STOP THE MASSACRE OF THE POOR**

New Delhi , 26th May,2018

The state-sponsored terrorism unleashed on the suffering, much-harassed people of Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, is a black chapter in the history of the oppression that poor and helpless people are subjected to, to facilitate corporate loot. Thirteen lives are already snuffed out in order to safeguard the blood-thirsty greed of one man, who has the audacity to name his empire of murderous profiteering 'Vedanta'. I am ashamed of myself that I have kept quiet about this sacrilege done to our spiritual philosophy by one who cares too hoots for anything godly or spiritual.

Ever since Modi has come to power, we have seen an unprecedented iron-handedness in dealing with people protesting for their basic rights, whether it be farmers protesting against the deprivation inflicted on them, or civilians protesting against anti-people measures or poor people protesting against corporate greed imperiling their survival. The people of Thoothukudi have been complaining of serious health problems due to the pollution spewed by Sterlite. I am at a loss to ascertain on what basis the Green Tribunal permitted this company to resume its operations, lifting the ban imposed by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Those responsible for it owe an explanation to the people of India.

It does not stand to reason that the decision to massacre unarmed civilians in such large numbers was taken entirely by a DGP. The police, as a rule, do the bidding of their political masters. The over-zealous enthusiasm displayed by the state on behalf of a corporate shark cannot be explained away as protecting law and order. Nor was it charity. The considerations and calculations that inspired the political establishment in Chennai to bat for Anil Aggarwal sacrificing the lives of the citizens need to be brought to light. I sincerely hope that the CBI inquiry, as and when it is held, will cover this aspect of the tragedy as well.

My heart goes out to the victims of Sterlite. I appeal to the President of India to intervene promptly and effectively in this matter and bring this Sterlite-perpetrated anti-people atrocity to a halt. Citizens being massacred by the state, in collusion with corporate sharks, is more condemnable than citizens being killed by terrorists. The actions of the Tamil Nadu government deserve nation-wide condemnation.