

SC tells NHRC to look into Manipur deaths

The SC called the killings a “violation of human rights.”

The alleged extra-judicial killings and fake encounters by the Army, Assam Rifles and the police in Manipur “cannot be tolerated”, and is not just about “violation of human rights” but “widespread” deaths in the State, the Supreme Court told the National Human Rights Commission on Thursday.

A Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and U.U. Lalit urged the NHRC to spare no effort to participate in the ongoing investigation by the CBI-SIT in several cases of suspicious deaths.

“This is not just about any violation of human rights. This also includes deaths which could be murder or not... this has to be given far more importance... Whatever has happened appears to be widespread... This type of violation cannot be tolerated and you are an independent and powerful body,” Justice Lokur orally addressed the counsel for the top human rights body in the country.

On July 2, the Bench had urged the NHRC to be “actively involved” in the CBI probe.

Framing of chargesheets

Additional Solicitor General Maninder Singh, for the CBI, welcomed the participation of the NHRC in the investigation.

Mr. Singh said the NHRC officers would be given full access to the investigation and can participate in the framing of chargeheets in future.

However, he said the CBI should be allowed to proceed in four cases in which the investigation is already over and the chargesheets are in the process of being filed. The court allowed it.

When the NHRC counsel expressed doubts about whether it could spare personnel for the investigation, Justice Lalit was firm, saying the court would pass the order and the Commission should consider sparing the officers for at least the next two months.

The court ordered two NHRC officers to be devoted to the probe and directed the NHRC to increase its manpower.

The court, which is hearing a PIL seeking a probe into as many as 1,528 cases of extra-judicial killings in Manipur, had on July 14 last year constituted an SIT and ordered lodging of FIRs and probe into such killings.

END

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