

Statement in Support of Hon'ble Law Minister's Remarks

We, the undersigned are regular and active practitioners of the legal profession. We have read with a sense of alarm, reports appearing in the media that a paltry number of lawyers had issued a statement condemning the remarks of the Hon'ble Union Law Minister Shri Kiren Rijju to the effect that three – four retired activist Judges had been making anti India statements and whoever does make anti India statements, regardless of their vocation, shall have to pay a price. The said remark was made by the Hon'ble Law Minister at the recently held media conclave.

We are of the clear opinion that there is nothing wrong with the remarks of the Hon'ble Law Minister. No person, be it a Judge or a lawyer or for that matter engaged in any other vocation, has the right to make comments and statements which, even remotely, are against the best interests of our beloved Mother land. The Hon'ble Law Minister did not equate anti India statements with criticism of the Central Government. Every citizen of this Country has a constitutionally protected right to criticise the policies and / or working of an elected Government. Having said that, criticising the nation itself is certainly not a part of free speech and is very different from criticising the Government.

The Hon'ble Law Minister in the very same discussion spoke of how he enjoys a 'fantastic working relationship with present Chief Justice of India, his predecessor, Chief Justices of High Courts as well as retired judges. However, as always, a select part of the words spoken have been lifted in abstract to spin a concocted narrative, in order to harm the nation's interests.

The Hon'ble Law Minister has correctly reminded us that the judiciary cannot be playing the opposition's role. It is a pity that a dearth of leaders in the legislature's opposition benches has prompted certain thinking heads to perceive the judiciary as their voice alone. The Hon'ble Minister clearly spelt out that judiciary is not a political tool and in fact it is the legislature that represents the voice of the people of India. Administrative processes have thus been let out to the Government as per our Constitution. Attempts to re-align the separation of powers must be deprecated.

Repeatedly, during the said discussion, the Hon'ble Minister corrected the anchor of his usage of the word 'confrontation' and said it would be better to use the phrase "difference of opinion". He further added that even between own colleagues there is difference of opinion that is healthy and encouraging. We stand for constructive criticism, which is not at the expense of our nation's integrity and sovereignty. As stated by the Hon'ble Minister, the Indian Judiciary is not weak. Sinister statements such as "Government is trying to take over the judiciary" made by a selected few individuals cannot be legitimized and need to be called out whenever necessary. The Government has been playing its part to strengthen the judiciary and there has

been no such instance that could be interpreted as undermining the judiciary's position in our Constitutional framework.

We categorically state that the remarks made by the Hon'ble Law Minister at the said media conclave were absolutely correct. The said so called condemnation by a miniscule number of Lawyers, does not in any manner, reflect the sentiment of the majority of the legal fraternity across the country. At best, it is the sentiment of an insignificant minority of lawyers made in their individual capacities to achieve their own self gain, which is meaningless and do no good to our institutions as such. Consequences should certainly visit anyone who criticises Bharat.

We stand solidly with the Hon'ble Law Minister and endorse his remarks.