

## **Assault on National Constitutional Authorities**

**18/11/2025**

We, the senior citizens of civil society, express our grave concern that India's democracy is under assault, not by force, but by a rising tide of venomous rhetoric directed toward its foundational institutions. Some political leaders, instead of offering genuine policy alternative, resort to provocative but unsubstantiated accusations in their theatrical political strategy. After their attempts to tarnish the Indian Armed Forces by questioning their valour and accomplishments, and the Judiciary by questioning its fairness, Parliament, and its constitutional functionaries, now it is the turn of Election Commission of India to face systematic and conspiratorial attacks on its integrity and reputation.

The Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha, has repeatedly attacked the Election Commission, declaring that he has open and shut proof that the Election Commission is involved in vote theft and claimed that he has 100 per cent proof. Using unbelievably uncouth rhetoric that what he has found is an atom bomb and when it explodes, the EC would have no place to hide. He has also issued threats that whoever in the Elections Commission is involved in this exercise, right from top to bottom, he will not spare them. According to him, ECI is indulging in treason. He has gone on record to threaten that if CEC/ECs are retired, he will hound them. Yet, despite such scathing accusations, there has been no formal complaint filed by him, along with the prescribed sworn affidavit, to escape his accountability for levelling unsubstantiated allegations and threatening public servants in performance of their duty.

Moreover, several senior figures of Congress and other political parties, leftist NGOs, ideologically opinionated scholars, and a few attention seekers in other walks of life, have joined in with similarly blistering rhetoric against SIR, even declaring that the Commission has descended into complete shamelessness by acting like the "B-team of the BJP. Such fiery rhetoric may be emotionally powerful — but it collapses under scrutiny, because the ECI has publicly shared its SIR methodology, overseen verification by court-sanctioned means, removed ineligible names in a compliant manner, and added new eligible voters. This suggests that these accusations are an attempt to drape political frustration in the garb of institutional crisis.

This pattern of behaviour reflects what might be called "impotent rage" — deep anger born of repeated electoral failure and frustration, without a concrete plan to reconnect with the people. When political leaders lose touch with the aspirations of ordinary citizens, they lash out at institutions instead of rebuilding their credibility. Theatrics replace analysis. Public spectacle

takes the place of public service.

The irony is stark: when electoral outcomes are favourable in certain States where opposition -driven political parties form governments, criticism of the Election Commission disappears. When they are unfavourable in certain States, the Commission becomes the villain in every narrative. This selective outrage exposes opportunism, not conviction. It is a convenient deflection: to give the impression that loss is not a result of strategy, but conspiracy.

India's democracy rests on institutions built by our founding generation, who engaged in principled and disciplined politics, even under the most serious differences. They defended the sanctity of democratic structures, even when they had every reason to question them. They sought to strengthen, not to undermine, the constitutional bedrock.

Today, thinking of ECI, the country also remembers the likes of T. N. Seshan and N. Gopalaswami, whose unyielding leadership transformed the Election Commission into a formidable constitutional sentinel. They did not court popularity. They did not chase headlines. They enforced the rules — fearlessly, impartially, relentlessly. Under them, the Commission gained moral and institutional teeth. It became a guardian, not a bystander. They were answerable to the people of India, and not to the machinations of political parties.

Now is the time for civil society and the citizens of India to stand firmly with the Election Commission, not out of flattery, but out of conviction. The society should demand that political actors stop undermining this vital institution with baseless allegations and theatrical denunciations. Instead, they should offer the public serious policy alternatives, meaningful reform ideas, and a national vision rooted in reality.

Beyond mere discourse, however, lies an urgent existential question: who should find place in our electorate? Fake or bogus voters, non-citizens, and individuals who do not have a legitimate stake in India's future must have no place in deciding its government — allowing them to influence elections is a grave threat to the sovereignty and stability of the nation. Across the world, democracies treat illegal immigration firmly. The United States rigorously detains and deports unauthorised entrants and bars them from voting. The United Kingdom places permanent restrictions on civic rights for irregular residents. Australia enforces strict offshore detention to control who can originate claims. Japan and South Korea keep tight screening and rapid deportation processes. Even in Europe, countries like Germany and France have tightened enforcement; they insist citizenship matters when safeguarding democratic institutions.

If other nations guard the electoral integrity of their states so resolutely, India must be equally proactive. The sanctity of our electoral rolls is not a partisan issue – it is a national imperative.

We call upon the Election Commission to continue its path of transparency and rigour. Publish complete data, defend itself through legal channels when necessary, and reject politics dressed up as victimhood. We call upon political leaders to respect the constitutional process, to compete not through baseless accusation but through policy articulation, and to accept democratic verdicts with grace.

Civil society reaffirms its unshakeable faith in the Indian Armed Force, the Indian Judiciary and Executive, and specifically the Election Commission, in its integrity, and in its role as guardian of democracy. India's institutions must not be reduced to political punching bags. Indian democracy is resilient – its people are wise. The time has come for leadership rooted in truth, not theatrics; in ideas, not invective; in service, not spectacle.

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**-----List of Signatories attached -----**