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## Opposition Terms Supreme Court's Remarks on Rahul Gandhi "Unwarranted"; Calls for Judicial Restraint

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Opposition leaders from the INDIA bloc expressed concern over remarks made by a Supreme Court bench during a defamation hearing involving Rahul Gandhi, calling the observations "unwarranted" and urging greater restraint from the judiciary when dealing with political matters.

The comment at the center of the controversy came during proceedings over Gandhi's 2022 statement that Chinese troops were "thrashing Indian soldiers in Arunachal Pradesh." The bench, comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih, questioned Gandhi's statement and observed that "if you are a true Indian, you would not have said this."

Following the hearing, the INDIA bloc floor leaders convened a meeting in Parliament and issued a statement stressing the importance of preserving democratic norms and roles. "The judiciary must allow space for democratic expression, particularly from elected representatives. Personal comments that question patriotism cross a line," the statement read.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra publicly defended her brother, saying, "No judge has the authority to define what makes someone a true Indian." She reiterated that Rahul Gandhi's remarks were directed at the government's handling of national security, not at the armed forces.

The opposition underlined that elected leaders have a responsibility to ask difficult questions and hold those in power accountable. They argued that Gandhi's comments were part of legitimate political discourse, especially in his role as Leader of the Opposition.

Meanwhile, the BJP welcomed the court's observation, with several party leaders asserting that political figures must exercise caution when speaking on sensitive national security matters. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis stated that "responsibility must accompany the right to free speech."

The incident has sparked a broader conversation about the fine line between judicial scrutiny and political expression. While both sides agree on the need for accountability, the debate reflects a growing demand for clearer boundaries between institutions in public discourse.