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भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

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The Bar Council of India is compelled to issue this urgent and grave public statement in the wake of an inhuman, targeted and nearly fatal assault upon Shri Y.R. Sadashiva Reddy, Senior Advocate and Co Chairman of the Bar Council of India, who also serves as a member of the Karnataka State Bar Council. The attack, executed in broad daylight on 16 April 2025 inside his professional chamber in Bengaluru, was perpetrated by two unknown assailants who stormed his premises with iron rods, violently attacked him in the presence of his junior advocate, and inflicted multiple grievous injuries including fractures on his right forearm, left elbow, and leg. These were not random injuries, these were blows aimed at silencing, at crippling, and at intimidating a senior advocate and an elected representative of the legal fraternity.

This brazen act, carried out with clear premeditation and open threats of murder, is an alarming symptom of a deeper sickness now infecting the space in which legal professionals are meant to operate safely and independently. Shri Reddy's FIR has revealed that the attackers were motivated by an old and settled complaint from a woman, which had been duly handled by the Karnataka State Bar Council nearly two years ago. It had no merit and was closed in accordance with the law. Yet, personal vendetta, incited perhaps by those who resist the regulatory powers of the Bar Councils, turned into physical violence and bloodshed.

The gravity of this incident cannot be overstated. This is not just an attack on one individual advocate. This is an assault on the entire legal fraternity's ability to regulate itself, to enforce ethical standards, and to function without fear or coercion. If an advocate is not safe in his own chamber while performing his professional and statutory duties, what safety can be guaranteed to any officer of the court? How can members of the Bar pass orders, conduct verification, or even discharge day-to-day functions if they are made targets of criminal assault for doing so?

It must be remembered that advocates are not ordinary professionals. They are officers of the court, torchbearers of constitutional governance, and the voice of the people. They are defenders of justice who speak for the voiceless and hold the scales of legal integrity in their hands. Yet, if such individuals can be hunted down, threatened, and beaten in broad daylight, the message sent is one of utter lawlessness. It is not only Shri Reddy who has been assaulted. It is every conscientious lawyer in this country who is being told, stop your work or suffer the consequences. If this trend is not stopped immediately and decisively, the entire system of justice will stand exposed and endangered.

Equally disturbing are the ongoing threats, many of them daily, received by advocates across the country. There is repeated and attempted intimidation and explicit references to disciplinary and verification actions being undertaken by statutory bodies. Coordinated efforts are being made by anti-social and rogue elements to create fear, obstruct justice, and paralyze the independence of advocates and legal institutions. These are not isolated incidents but part of a growing pattern aimed at undermining the legal system through threats, abuse, and violence.

It is now equally evident that ordinary practicing advocates, especially those involved in representing clients in sensitive, criminal, civil, or public interest matters, are becoming soft targets. The Bar Council of India has received several representations from advocates nationwide who face intimidation for merely doing their duty. Advocates are being harassed, their offices disturbed, their families threatened, and their physical safety jeopardized for simply upholding the law. This is a direct attack on the justice delivery mechanism.

The Bar Council of India firmly believes that protection must be extended to all advocates facing any form of threat or obstruction in the discharge of their legal duties. There must be zero tolerance for violence or intimidation against advocates. Every State Government and law enforcement agency must treat attacks on advocates as attacks on the legal system itself. Institutional mechanisms must be developed by State Governments and the Centre to ensure immediate, meaningful protection for practicing advocates. This includes provision for urgent FIRs without procedural delay, priority police intervention in offices or court premises, panic buttons and CCTV surveillance at Bar premises, legal assistance to affected advocates, and stringent, time-bound prosecution of those found threatening legal professionals.

Further, all Bar Associations functioning in court complexes must also be brought under the umbrella of institutional protection. These associations serve as the operational and cultural backbone of the legal profession at the grassroots level. They are often the first responders when members face threats. It is essential that court premises housing these associations be treated as sensitive zones, with appropriate policing and coordination between local Bar leaders and the district administration.

What we are witnessing is not just dereliction of duty. It is contempt by silence. A situation where even after a senior advocate has been beaten nearly to death, the response of institutions remains tepid and procedural, rather than swift and preventive. This emboldens the lawless. It encourages those who believe they can bend justice through intimidation. It sends the worst possible message to young lawyers entering the profession, that courage will be punished, and silence will be safer.

The Bar Council of India reiterates that the present crisis stems from a resistance to reform and accountability. Across the country, verification drives and disciplinary actions are exposing fake and unethical elements within the system. But as we continue this mission, those trying to protect their illegitimate presence are turning violent. Threats, abuse, and conspiracies are now daily hazards for honest, practicing advocates. Our commitment remains unshaken, but it cannot be allowed to exist in an atmosphere of fear.

Accordingly, the Bar Council of India demands and advises the following immediate measures.

First, full security must be extended to all advocates under threat, irrespective of their designation or position. Protection must include their residences, offices, and chambers, particularly when any threat or complaint is reported. Every district and police jurisdiction must establish advocate protection cells headed by a designated officer responsible for immediate intervention.

Second, immediate arrest and custodial interrogation of the two assailants who attacked Shri Reddy must take place. Their network, motives, and any financial or political backing must be thoroughly investigated. The charges must include not only violent assault under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita but also conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Third, all Bar Council offices and court complexes, including chambers and Bar Association offices located therein, must be treated as sensitive institutional sites. Security audits must be carried out, and physical infrastructure should include round-the-clock police presence, secure access control, installation of panic buttons, and CCTV surveillance. Local police must maintain liaison with Bar Associations and Bar Councils for early threat detection.

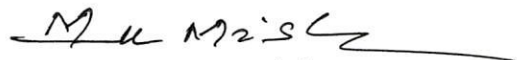
Fourth, a centralized grievance and emergency response system for advocate protection must be launched by the Ministry of Law and Justice in collaboration with Bar Councils. Any advocate under threat should be able to report immediately and receive institutional and police support without bureaucratic delay.

Fifth, a joint task force must be established at the national level involving the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, State DGPs, and Bar Council representatives. This body should be empowered to investigate, track, and dismantle networks or groups that are systematically targeting legal professionals across the country.

The time for symbolic statements and empty assurances has passed. The situation has escalated beyond caution into a full-blown constitutional and professional crisis. This is no longer a matter of individual protection, it is a matter of preserving the sanctity of legal advocacy in India. The courts cannot function, nor can justice be delivered, if those who bring the law to life are themselves left unprotected, unguarded, and at the mercy of violence.

The Bar Council of India and the legal fraternity across India stand united, resolute, and fearless. We will not allow the noble profession of law to be terrorized into silence. We will continue our duty to defend justice, hold power accountable, and serve the people of this country. However, we demand that the State now stand by us in action, not in sympathy, not in delay, not in tokenism.

This is our final call to the system. Act now. Protect those who protect the law. Or accept that the very edifice of justice stands on shaking ground.



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