

# Madras HC judge hears case against self, calls advocate ‘comedy piece’

[thefederal.com/category/states/south/tamil-nadu/madras-hc-judge-hears-case-against-self-calls-advocate-comedy-piece-199101](https://thefederal.com/category/states/south/tamil-nadu/madras-hc-judge-hears-case-against-self-calls-advocate-comedy-piece-199101)

Pramila Krishnan

July 28, 2025



At the end of the hearing, the Bench comprising Justice Swaminathan and Justice K Rajasekar ordered that the matter be forwarded to the Chief Justice for further consideration. As the proceedings concluded, Justice Swaminathan made a parting remark to the advocate: “I once regretted calling you a coward. Now, I don’t regret it at all.” Representational image: iStock

## **During Monday’s hearing, Justice Swaminathan reprimanded Vanchinathan for what he described as a relentless and baseless campaign against the judiciary**

The courtroom of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court witnessed an unusual scene on Monday (July 28) when Justice GR Swaminathan directly criticised an advocate, who had filed a complaint against him alleging caste bias, calling him a “comedy piece.”

Following several interviews, social media posts, and a complaint to the Chief Justice by advocate Vanchinathan accusing Justice Swaminathan of caste bias, the judge summoned the advocate to appear before the court for the third time on Monday.

## **'I don't regret calling you a coward'**

---

At the end of the hearing, the Bench comprising Justice Swaminathan and Justice K Rajasekar ordered that the matter be forwarded to the Chief Justice for further consideration. As the proceedings concluded, Justice Swaminathan made a parting remark to the advocate: "I once regretted calling you a coward. Now, I don't regret it at all."

Legal experts and activists have raised questions about how the judge came into possession of a complaint meant for the Supreme Court, and how he went on to summon the advocate and pass orders in connection with the same issue.

In his complaint filed on June 14, requesting an inquiry into Justice Swaminathan's conduct, advocate Vanchinathan raised 15 allegations. He claimed there was a disturbing pattern of preferential treatment and caste bias in favour of a specific group of advocates, "particularly those from the Brahmin community and those aligned with right-wing ideologies".

## **'You are all comedy pieces'**

---

During Monday's hearing, Justice Swaminathan reprimanded Vanchinathan for what he described as a relentless and baseless campaign against the judiciary.

"You're a comedy piece," the judge told the advocate. "I don't know who called you all revolutionaries. You are all comedy pieces," he added, after Vanchinathan declined to respond orally and instead requested a written order from the court.

While maintaining that criticism of judicial decisions is valid, Justice Swaminathan made it clear that allegations of caste bias were a serious matter. "Mr. Vanchinathan, I fully respect your right to criticise my judgments harshly. But bringing caste into it changes everything," he said.

"You've been slandering me for four years. I've refrained from acting against you all this while. Don't think we're unaware of what's happening. The entire ecosystem may have joined hands, but we won't be silenced. Judicial independence is non-negotiable," he added.

## **Support for Vanchinathan**

---

Meanwhile, eight retired Madras High Court judges, including Justices K Chandru, D Hariparanthaman, and S Vimala, have written to the Chief Justice of India urging institutional intervention. They argued that complaints regarding judges should be handled through the Chief Justice's office, not directly by the judge concerned.

Responding to the intervention of the retired judges, Justice Swaminathan said, "It's unfortunate that retired judges have chosen to issue statements while the matter is sub judice."

Speaking to *The Federal*, advocate Henri Tiphagne said Justice Swaminathan's comments in open court were distasteful. "The complaint filed by Vanchinathan should be treated as a separate entity. Instead of leaving the matter to the Chief Justice, Justice Swaminathan summoned the advocate and questioned him. As advocates, we all stand by Vanchinathan for the kind of treatment he received in open court," he said.

He added that the judge could have called advocate Vanchinathan to his chambers and sought clarification privately. "Commenting on the complaint in open court is not what we expected from the judge," he said.