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Prime Minister's remarks termed "anti-poor"

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The steering group of the Right to Food Campaign on Wednesday expressed its "shock" at Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement asking the Supreme Court not to interfere with policy and said it showed how "completely anti-poor" the government was.

In a press release here, the Campaign — a conglomeration of rights and civil society groups — said that when, under the Constitution, people had the Right to Life as well as the right to approach courts, "the statement showed that the head of the Executive, does not want the Fundamental Right of the people to be realised, and worse, interferes with their right to get justice."

"We are glad that the Prime Minister has finally spoken up on the food issue, as it has ended up further confirming that this government is completely anti-poor," said the Campaign.

"While we agree that ideally the role of the courts in policy making should be limited, the citizens have a right to approach the Supreme Court in situations like the present scenario when the Executive has failed to ensure that the rights of people are protected. It is indeed ironic that while the same Prime Minister treated the delay in preparations for the Commonwealth Games as an emergency, the response to the hunger situation in the country is yet to come," it said.

Among others the signatories to the press release are Annie Raja (National Federation of Indian Women), Anuradha Talwar (New Trade Union Initiative), Arun Gupta (Breast Feeding Promotion Network of India), Arundhati Dhuru (National Alliance of People's Movement of India), Ashok Bharti (National Confederation of Dalit Organisations), Anjali Bhardwaj and Nikhil Dey (National Campaign for People's Right to Information), Colin Gonsalves (Human Rights Law Network), Kavita Srivastava (PUCL), Mira Shiva and Vandana Prasad (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan) and Subhash Bhatnagar (National Campaign Committee for Unorganised Sector workers).

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