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Title: Need to amend section 124A of the Indian Penal Code.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): The freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution is indispensable to our democracy. But Sedition under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code infringes upon this right by harassing citizens who simply disagree with the Government.

This archaic and oppressive provision is a legacy of our colonial masters, introduced in pre-independent India. Even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had stated that "the sooner we get rid of this provision, the better". The Constituent Assembly abstained from including it as an exception to Article 19.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has also ruled that acts of sedition should be put through a test of 'tangible evidence of actual harm', to establish a direct link between the 'action' and the 'reaction' before punishing individuals. Therefore, I urge the Government to amend Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code to ensure that it is only used when words directly result in the incitement to violence.