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Won't link political views to court order in future, says Rahul

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NEW DELHI: In response to the Supreme Court's notice on a contempt petition, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday re-filed his earlier affidavit expressing regret for unintentionally linking the SC's April 10 order in the Rafale review petition to his "chowkidar chor hai" jibe against PM Narendra Modi.

Though Rahul undertook never to link his political views to court orders in future, he avoided the word 'apology' while responding to BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi's petition which sought initiation of contempt proceedings against him for distorting the SC's April 10 order as a finding that Modi had indulged in corruption in the Rafale deal and that he gave Rs 30,000 crore to industrialist Anil Ambani from the deal.

The court had rejected the Centre's objection to the court considering defence documents on the Rafale deal.

Rahul did not deny making the statements. In his 110-page affidavit filed through advocate Sunil Fernandes, the Congress president explained his statements in Hindi were made "in a rhetorical flourish in the heat of the moment." He said while making these statements, he did not have a copy of the SC order and he had relied on "electronic and social media reportage and the version of workers and activists surrounding him".

"On April 10, at the time of and in my statement, the issues relating to court proceedings unfortunately got juxtaposed and

mingled with a political slogan 'chowkidar chor hai' being used extensively by Congress party and myself for the last several months, which is a matter of intense and frenzied public debate during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections," he said.

Rahul said it was clear and obvious to him that "no court, much less the apex court, would adopt, endorse or uphold a political slogan like above (chowkidar chor hai). It is unfortunate that this slogan got intermingled with my comments on and references to SC's April 10 order". The SC will hear the Rafale review petition and the contempt plea against Rahul together on Tuesday.

Responding to Rahul's 'regret' affidavit, Lekhi said the contemnor had not purged himself of the contempt by steadfastly refusing to apologise to the court even while admitting that he wrongly linked the SC order to the "chowkidar chor hai" jibe at Modi.

She said Rahul, as per his own admission, was well aware that no court would make a comment akin to his political jibe and yet has refused to apologise. Hence, he should face contempt of court charges, she said.