

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 9.6.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"This is to bring to your notice yet another incident in which six fishermen, in one mechanized fishing boat from Rameswaram fishing base of Ramanathapuram District, were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 9.6.2016 and taken to Thalaimannar.

It is highly disheartening to note that our fishermen are facing daily threats of harassment and abduction at the hands of the Sri Lankan Navy while fishing in their traditional fishing waters in the Palk Bay.

I would like to remind you that 15 fishermen apprehended earlier this month are still languishing in Sri Lankan custody. 91 fishing boats are also in Sri Lankan custody at present. The Sri Lankan strategy of not releasing the boats while releasing the fishermen and thus throttling the livelihood of the fishermen is causing immense frustration amongst the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. I urge you to take this up with the highest authorities of the Sri Lankan Government and ensure the immediate release of our fishermen and their fishing boats.

The IMBL itself is a matter sub-judice in the Supreme Court of India wherein the Government of Tamil Nadu and I, in my personal capacity, have challenged the unconstitutional ceding of Katchatheevu through the 1974 and 1976 Agreements. The Government of Tamil Nadu strongly reiterates the need to restore the traditional rights of our fishermen by annulling the ill-advised Indo-Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976 urgently.

I urge your personal intervention in this matter and request you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to take up the matter with the Sri Lankan authorities in a concrete and decisive manner so as to secure the immediate release of our 21 fishermen and 92 fishing boats, including the 6 fishermen and their one mechanised fishing boat apprehended on 9.6.2016 at the earliest."
