

**Press Release No.070**

**Date:01.02.2016**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 31.1.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"I am constrained to write to you yet again to bring to your notice the repeated instances of apprehension of innocent Indian fishermen belonging to the coastal Districts of Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. It is reported that 5 Indian fishermen in a boat from Jegathapattinam and 4 more fishermen in a boat from Kottaipattinam, both in Pudukottai District, have been apprehended along with their boats by the Sri Lankan Navy on the evening of 30.1.2016 and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

Based on my repeated requests and the Government of India's efforts all the Indian fishermen who were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy during 2015 have been released, but their boats and fishing gear, which are essential to earn their livelihood, have not yet been released, aggravating the sense of frustration and despondency amongst the fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu. I reiterate my request that the fishing boats and gear be restored to our fishermen in a refurbished condition by the Government of India at the earliest.

My Government strongly believes that the unconstitutional Indo-Sri Lankan Agreements of 1974 and 1976 should be nullified and the traditional rights of our fishermen restored at the earliest. As you are aware, these agreements are under legal challenge on grounds of constitutional validity in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

My Government has taken many steps for deep sea fishing activities amongst the Palk Bay fishing communities, including provision of subsidy assistance for purchasing deep sea tuna long liners and promoting use of gill nets. I have also sought assistance to the extent of Rs.1520 crores as a comprehensive financial package with a recurring grant of Rs.10 crores per annum for maintenance dredging, from the Government of India, for deep sea fishing and infrastructure in the Memoranda

I presented to you on 3.6.2014 and 7.8.2015. I reiterate my request for early sanction of the Government of Tamil Nadu's proposal.

I urge your personal intervention to prevent the aggravation that the Sri Lankan authorities and Navy are causing to our fishermen. I specifically request you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to take up the matter with the Sri Lankan authorities urgently and secure the immediate release of the 15 fishermen and 69 fishing boats in Sri Lankan custody including the 9 fishermen and their 2 fishing boats apprehended on 30.1.2016."

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