

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dt.30.9.2014 addressed by Thiru O.Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi is reproduced below :

"Due to the untiring and relentless efforts of our beloved leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, 76 Indian fishermen languishing in Sri Lankan jails were released by the Sri Lankan court today (30.9.2014). Out of these 76 fishermen, 72 are from Tamil Nadu. No boats have been released. I appreciate the efforts of the Government of India under your leadership in securing the release of fishermen who were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy but unfortunately 71 fishing boats of these fishermen have not yet been released by the Sri Lankan Government and are falling apart from disuse there itself. The impending advent of the North East Monsoon mandates their immediate release to prevent further damage and deterioration.

I would like to bring to your notice yet another incident, wherein 4 fishermen in a mechanised fishing boat who set sail for fishing from Rameswaram fishing base of Ramanathapuram District on 27.9.2014, were drifting due to a technical snag and were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on 28.9.2014 and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka. The 4 fishermen were produced before the Magistrate's Court, Kayts on 29.9.2014 and have been remanded till 10.10.2014.

In another incident on 29.9.2014, 4 fishing boats from Kottaipattinam fishing base, Pudukkottai District with 16 fishermen ventured into the sea for fishing. While fishing, they were apprehended in the early hours of 30.9.2014 by the Sri Lankan Navy and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

The traditional rights of fishermen from Tamil Nadu to fish in the waters of Palk Bay is continuously being infringed upon by the Sri Lankan Navy. The IMBL itself is a matter that is sub judice in the Supreme Court of India wherein the Government of Tamil Nadu and our beloved leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma in her personal capacity as General Secretary of AIADMK has challenged the

unconstitutional ceding away of Katchatheevu by 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 am confident that your Government will find suitable mechanisms to resolve this long pending fishing dispute between India and Sri Lanka by retrieving Katchatheevu and restoring the traditional fishing rights of our fishermen.

I request the Government of India to take positive and concrete steps to secure the immediate release of 20 fishermen and 75 boats still in custody of the Sri Lankan authorities.”

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.

Dated: 1.10.2014