

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 2.8.2013 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Dr.Manmohan Singh**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below: -

"I wish to draw your immediate attention to three major incidents involving attack, apprehension and illegal detention of Indian fishermen on the high seas by the Sri Lankan Navy that occurred on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013. I have been informed that on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 5 fishermen belonging to Perumalpettai fishing village of Nagapattinam District were brutally attacked on the high seas with pipes, sickles and other deadly weapons by Sri Lankan fishermen. All the 5 fishermen have been admitted to the Government District Headquarters Hospital, Nagapattinam.

Similarly, 20 fishermen in 3 mechanised fishing boats belonging to Nagapattinam District have been abducted and illegally detained by the Sri Lankan Navy near Point Pedro on 30.7.2013. Again, on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013, 16 fishermen in 2 boats belonging to Nagapattinam District were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy near Mullaitheevu.

I am pained to note that such incidents of unlawful abduction and arrest of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy go on unabated and are occurring with alarming frequency. It is clear that the Sri Lankan Navy is acting with impunity and carrying out unprovoked and illegal acts of abduction and detention of innocent fishermen from Tamil Nadu because of the total lack of response from the Government of India. It is disappointing that the Government of India has failed to take any concerted steps to convey to the Government of Sri Lanka, through the highest diplomatic channels, our strong protest and sense of outrage at these continuing incidents of attack and illegal abduction of fishermen of Tamil Nadu on the high seas by the Sri Lankan Navy.

I have repeatedly pointed out to you in my previous letters the urgent need to take up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest levels. I also wish to point out that the Ministry of External Affairs has not taken any steps to lodge a strong protest with the Government of Sri Lanka about these unprovoked instances of illegal detention of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. I consider that the least that the Government of India can do is to summon the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and convey India's strong protest against and deep sense of disapproval over these unprovoked assaults upon and arrests of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy continuing unchecked.

Unless the Government of India takes positive and concrete steps to secure the release of these fishermen, the deep sense of frustration amongst the fishermen community in Tamil Nadu is bound to escalate. I once again exhort you to take immediate action to secure the release of all the fishermen from Tamil Nadu who are in Sri Lankan custody and arrange for their immediate repatriation.

May I request your immediate intervention in the matter?"

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