

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 2.2.2017 of **Thiru O. Panneerselvam**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

"This is to bring to your notice, an incident of apprehension of Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu. It is reported that 5 fishermen in a mechanised fishing boat who set sail from Jegathapattinam fishing base of Pudukottai District of Tamil Nadu, have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 2.2.2017. The fishermen have been taken to Kankesanthurai in Sri Lanka and remanded.

The Sri Lankan authorities continue to infringe upon the historical rights enjoyed by our fishermen to fish in their traditional waters of Palk Bay. The Government of Tamil Nadu reiterates that the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) itself is a matter which is sub-judice before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Our revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had challenged the constitutional validity of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreements of 1974 and 1976 in her personal capacity, and subsequently the Government of Tamil Nadu impleaded itself in this case.

The Sri Lankan authorities have not released any of the fishing boats that were apprehended by them since February 2015. With their sole means livelihood taken away, the Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu are in a despondent state. Presently there are 119 boats in Sri Lankan custody which are precariously berthed on the Sri Lankan shore. Though the Government of Sri Lanka committed to consider the release of the boats in the Ministerial level meeting held at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 2.1.2017, no action has been taken as yet in this regard. I request the Government of India to take up this issue with the authorities of the Sri Lankan Government and ensure the immediate release of the precariously berthed boats and restore them in a refurbished condition to the fishermen for their immediate use.

I also request you to sanction the Comprehensive Special package of Rs.1650 crores including a recurring grant of Rs.10 crores, as sought by my Revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and reiterated in the Memorandum I had presented to you on 19.12.2016. This would go a long way in bringing about a permanent solution to this festering issue plaguing the lives of fishermen from the coastal Districts of Palk Bay in Tamil Nadu.

I again request you to kindly instruct the Ministry of External Affairs to take up the issue effectively with Sri Lanka and to secure the release of 25 fishermen and 119 fishing boats including the 5 fishermen and their mechanized fishing boat apprehended on 2.2.2017 without any delay. "

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