

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 3.3.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"It is unfortunate that the apprehension of our Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, while pursuing their traditional avocation of fishing, continues unabated. These continued instances of apprehension and abduction of our fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy are causing considerable unrest and resentment among the Tamil Nadu fishermen. I write to bring to your notice that 4 fishermen on board one motorised traditional craft, who went for fishing on 1.3.2016, from Arcottuthurai and another 4 fishermen on board another motorised traditional craft, who went for fishing on 2.3.2016, from Kodiakarai fishing base, both in Nagapattinam District, have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on 3.3.2016, and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

It is important to note that our fishermen are only following their traditional occupation and fishing in an area to which they have a historic claim - their traditional fishing waters of the Palk Bay. The very ownership of these waters and the position of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) are matters which are sub-judice in the Supreme Court of India as I had challenged the constitutional validity of the Indo- Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976 in my personal capacity, and subsequently, the Government of Tamil Nadu has also impleaded itself in this case.

My Government has also initiated 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. 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.

As I had repeatedly pointed out, the Sri Lankan strategy of not releasing the apprehended boats and fishing gear even after releasing the fishermen has severely impaired the means of livelihood of several fishermen families causing great frustration and despondency amongst

the fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu. The prolonged detention and disuse of these boats even through the severe North East monsoon would have caused extensive and irretrievable damage. I reiterate my request that the fishing boats and gear of the poor fishermen are restored in a refurbished condition by the Government of India at the earliest.

There is an urgent and imperative need to proactively initiate appropriate actions to deliver a permanent solution to this sensitive issue that plagues the livelihoods of thousands of Tamil Nadu fishermen. 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 35 fishermen and 73 fishing boats including the 8 fishermen and their two fishing boats apprehended on 3.3.2016.

May I request you to take immediate action in this regard?"

\*\*\*\*\*

**Issued by : Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.**  
**Date : 3.3.2016**