

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 4.3.2013 addressed to Dr.Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, is reproduced below:

"I wish to inform you that 16 fishermen from Thoothukudi District of Tamil Nadu, who were engaged in fishing in the Gulf of Mannar in 3 Mechanized Fishing boats bearing Registration Numbers TN/12/MFB/429, TN/12/MFB/431 and TN/12/MFB/003, are reported to have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 3.3.2013. The fishing boats and fishermen were reportedly taken to Kalpitiya Police Station for further investigation and it is learnt that they have been produced in Court.

I am pained to point out that the incidents of apprehension and harassment of innocent Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy have become a regular occurrence in the past few months creating a feeling of insecurity and fear amongst the fishermen community.

The families of the arrested 16 fishermen and various Fishermen Associations have appealed to the Government of Tamil Nadu to secure the early release of these apprehended fishermen since they were only pursuing their livelihood in the Gulf of Mannar area, where they have been fishing all along. The Sri Lankan Government has always assured us in various bilateral meetings that Indian fishermen who are apprehended while fishing will be released expeditiously without prolonged legal hurdles.

I, therefore, request you to kindly urge the Sri Lankan authorities to immediately release the 16 fishermen with their 3 boats without filing any cases against them.

I solicit your urgent action in this regard".

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

Dated : 04.03.2013