

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 7.4.2013 addressed to Dr.Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is reproduced below :

"I am deeply anguished to bring to your notice, the repeated onslaughts of the Sri Lankan Navy on innocent Tamil Nadu fishermen who eke out their livelihood by fishing in their traditional fishing grounds in the Indian Ocean. Lately, in the background of growing and continuing protests by the people of Tamil Nadu against the treatment meted out to the Sri Lankan Tamils by the authorities in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan Government has now resorted to arrests of our fishermen and are holding them in Sri Lankan Jails. You may be aware that 19 fishermen of Rameswaram have been in judicial custody in Sri Lanka since 13.3.2013. They have not yet been released till date. Apart from these, there are 5 fishermen of Rameswaram who have been languishing in Sri Lankan jails for the last over one year. Meanwhile, there has been yet another incident of arrest of 30 Tamil Nadu fishermen on 6.4.2013. These 30 fishermen of Rameswaram were fishing around Katchatheevu in registered Mechanised crafts. They were picked up by the Sri Lankan Navy on the evening of 6.4.2013 and have been remanded to custody up to 18.4.2013. This has caused enormous agitation and unrest amongst the entire fishing community in Tamil Nadu. No Government can watch as a mute spectator while its fisherfolk lose their livelihood because of the unfriendly act of an unfriendly neighbour nation. I have already stated in my earlier letters that the Government of Tamil Nadu, under my leadership, has challenged the issue of unilateral drawal of the IMBL leading to the ceding of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. We are agitated by repeated incidents of capture of our fishermen while pursuing their livelihood in their traditional fishing grounds. The action of the Sri Lankan Navy in continuously detaining the fishermen will only escalate the tensions between the two countries, besides creating immense unrest amongst the fishermen community. I also wish to reiterate once again that the acts of arrest and harassment of Tamil Nadu fishermen should be viewed as acts of provocation and aggression against India by Sri Lanka.

I, therefore, request you to take suitable action to get all the Tamil Nadu fishermen now in the custody of the Sri Lankan Government released immediately, along with the 24 fishermen who are already languishing in Sri Lankan Jails. I also request you to impress upon the Government of Sri Lanka to take effective steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents of arrest or harassment of Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy in future."

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Date : 7.4.2013