

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 6.6.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India :-

"This is to bring to your notice yet another incident in which four fishermen from Tamil Nadu have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy and their right to fishing in their traditional waters infringed upon. This is the third such incident within a week. It is reported that 4 fishermen in a mechanised fishing boat from Rameswaram fishing base in Ramanathapuram District were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 4.6.2016 and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

You would recall that I have written to you on many occasions, bringing to your notice the repeated instances of abduction and apprehension of innocent Indian fishermen belonging to the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy while eking out their livelihood in their traditional fishing waters. I have been requesting the Government of India to mount a strong diplomatic initiative to uphold the rights and interests of our Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu. In spite of my repeated appeals to ensure the safety and security of our innocent fishermen and to devise a permanent solution to this sensitive livelihood issue, the situation at sea remains precarious with the continued offensive acts of the Sri Lankan Navy.

The unconstitutional ceding of Katchatheevu by the agreements of 1974 and 1976 is central to this problem. The Sri Lankan strategy of not releasing the fishing boats, the main source of livelihood of the poor fishermen, is further aggravating the situation. At present, there are 90 fishing boats impounded and insecurely berthed in Sri Lanka and are undergoing severe deterioration.

I request you to urgently direct the Ministry of External Affairs to use diplomatic channels to ensure that our fishermen are allowed to peacefully pursue their livelihood in their traditional fishing waters. I also request your direct intervention to secure the immediate release of the 15 fishermen and 91 fishing boats in Sri Lankan custody, including the 4 fishermen and one mechanised fishing boat apprehended on 4.6.2016.

May I request immediate action in the matter?"