

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the letter addressed to Shri Dr. Manmohan Singh,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by Selvi J Jayalithaa,
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 7.6.2011

I would like to bring to your attention, a recent incident of arrest of 4 Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Police. The following four fishermen of Rameswaram Island - 1) Thiru Jayakumar, 2) Thiru Prabhat, 3) Thiru Sundar and 4) Thiru Marimuthu went fishing in a mechanized boat bearing Registration No. TN/12/MFB/252 from Rameswaram base on 1.6.2011 and were expected back on shore on 2.6.2011.

On 2.6.2011, when the fishermen were out at sea, sudden inclement weather and heavy winds resulted in the destruction of their boat. The above four fishermen of the capsized boat swam for about 8 hours through mid-sea and landed on the coast of Nainatheevu of Sri Lanka. They surrendered before the army check post, and were handed over to the Kayts Police on 3-6-2011. They were then, produced before the Kayts Court on 6.6.2011 and were remanded to Police custody till 17.6.2011.

The families of the arrested four fishermen and various fishermen Associations in the Rameswaram area have appealed to the Government of Tamil Nadu for early release of these apprehended fishermen. The Government of Tamil Nadu is also in constant touch with the officials of the Sri Lankan High Commission for arranging their early release.

I would like to seek your kind intervention in the issue and request you to ensure that the Government of Sri Lanka releases the above apprehended fishermen without further delay.

The Government of Tamil Nadu and the fishermen will be grateful if these members are released immediately as a gesture of goodwill by the Sri Lankan Government, who have already assured in various bilateral meetings that the Indian fishermen who inadvertently stray into Sri Lankan waters will be released expeditiously without prolonged legal hurdles.

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