

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 6.11.2013 addressed by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below: -

I write with a deep sense of anguish and pain about the fate of fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu, who suffer attacks and abduction at the hands of the Sri Lankan Navy in their traditional fishing waters in the Palk Bay. In spite of my repeated representations to you on this critical livelihood issue of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu, the harassment and arrest of these fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy continues unquestioned and unabated. The Sri Lankan Navy appears emboldened to act in a highhanded and repressive manner largely because of the Government of India's meek and passive approach to this serious issue.

In yet another shocking incident, 3 mechanised fishing boats bearing registration number IND-TN-10-MM-333, IND-TN-10-MM-158, IND-TN-10-MM-104, with 13 fishermen belonging to Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu which set out for fishing from Rameswaram fishing base on 4.11.2013 were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on 5.11.2013. In a separate incident, 4 fishing boats bearing registration numbers IND-TN-08-MM-028, IND-TN-08-MM-404, IND-TN-08-MM-082, IND-TN-06-MM-318 of Jagathapattinam, Pudukottai District with 17 fishermen were also apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on 5.11.2013. In all, 30 fishermen and 7 boats from Tamil Nadu have been unlawfully abducted by the Sri Lankan Navy on 5.11.2013.

You may recall that 56 fishermen who were apprehended and remanded on earlier occasions are still languishing in Sri Lankan Jails. 35 fishing boats belonging to these poor fishermen from Tamil Nadu are still in the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities. Such harsh, punitive and repressive action, which amounts to depriving poor fishermen families of their livelihood, deserves to be condemned in the strongest terms. The Government of India cannot continue to remain a passive spectator in the face of the highhanded belligerence of the Sri Lankan Navy.

May I once again urge your personal intervention in the matter and exhort you to take up the matter through the highest diplomatic channels and secure the immediate release of the 86 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and 42 fishing boats in Sri Lankan custody, at the earliest? I seek your personal intervention in the matter.

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