

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 9.8.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India :-

"I write to bring to your notice, yet another incident of apprehension of Indian fishermen from TamilNadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. Four fishermen in one mechanised fishing boat who set sail from Jegathapattinam fishing base of Pudukkottai District have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 8.8.2016 and taken to Kankesanthurai in Sri Lanka.

This most recent act of the Sri Lankan Navy has again created anxiety and unrest in the minds of our fishermen. A firm, clear, unequivocal and unambiguous message should be sent out by the Government of India to the Sri Lankan side to ensure that these apprehensions are stopped and the livelihood of the poor and innocent fishermen from Tamil Nadu who are engaged in fishing in their traditional waters is protected.

I once again reiterate that retrieving the Katchatheevu islet and abrogation of the 1974 and 1976 agreements alone can restore the traditional fishing grounds of the Palk Bay to the Tamil Nadu fishermen. The ceding of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka has been challenged on extremely valid and legal grounds by me in the Supreme Court of India, in my personal capacity and the Government of Tamil Nadu subsequently impleaded itself in this case.

The Sri Lankan strategy of not releasing the boats of our fishermen is causing great frustration amongst the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. Without their livelihood base, these fishermen are in a state of despondency. I urge you to take this up with the highest authorities of the Sri Lankan Government and ensure the immediate release of the precariously berthed boats which continue to suffer great damage.

You are also aware that my Government has taken a number of steps to minimize the pressure on the marine ecosystem. The comprehensive special package for deep sea fishing and infrastructure at a cost of Rs.1520 crores and a recurring grant of Rs.10 crores per annum for maintenance dredging which I had requested as part of the Memoranda presented to you on 3.6.2014, 7.8.2015 and 14.6.2016 must be urgently sanctioned.

I reiterate that the issue of apprehension of our fishermen and release of their boats must be taken up at the highest diplomatic level and the Government of India must take necessary steps to ensure the safety and security of our fishermen. I request your personal intervention to secure the release of the 4 fishermen and 103 fishing boats currently in Sri Lankan custody at the earliest."

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