

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dt.13.6.2017 by **Thiru Edappadi K Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

I write to bring to your notice a long pending livelihood issue of the fisher folk living in the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu along the Palk Bay. 135 fishing boats belonging to fishermen from Tamil Nadu, of which 61 were apprehended in 2015, 53 were apprehended in 2016 and 21 were apprehended in 2017, continue to remain impounded in Sri Lankan custody.

This issue was regularly highlighted to you by our revered leader the late Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Puratchi Thalaivi Amma in all her letters, which has also been reiterated in my previous letters that the Sri Lankan Government is following a deft strategy of not releasing the fishing boats even after the release of our fishermen thereby pushing our fishermen into a poverty stricken state, depriving them of their only means of livelihood.

I have repeatedly requested you to initiate all necessary diplomatic actions to secure the early release of these fishing boats and fishing gear and ensure that they are restored to the fishermen in a refurbished and usable condition. It has been pointed out many times that these fishing boats are perilously berthed and are in imminent threat of irreparable damage due to long periods of disuse and the onslaught of the monsoon. Hopes of release arose when the Government of Sri Lanka had committed to consider the release of the boats, which has rapidly dissipated as no decision has been taken so far in this regard.

I request you to kindly take up this issue urgently with the concerned authorities in Sri Lanka and arrange for an early release of the **135 fishing boats and 11 fishermen** currently in Sri Lankan custody.

Issued by : Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.

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