

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Text of the D.O. letter dated 14.3.2013 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:**

---

"It has been brought to my notice that 9 Mechanized Fishing Boats of Tamil Nadu with 53 fishermen onboard, which ventured into the sea for fishing on 13-3-2013 from Rameswaram fishing base, were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy and taken to Thalaimannar and Delft Island, and are now being kept in their custody. This incident of apprehension is another instance of the increasing intolerance of the Sri Lankan Navy towards the hapless fishermen of the Palk Bay area of Tamil Nadu who have no other alternative but to fish in the narrow Palk Bay fishing grounds that are further restricted by the unilateral drawal of the International Maritime Boundary Line, drawn without the consent of the Government of Tamil Nadu or its fishermen.

You will agree with me that solutions to the fishing disputes between two neighbouring countries are not resolved by force or by treating the fishermen of the neighbouring country as 'criminals' and arresting and terrorizing them through assaults and gun firing. However, the increasing belligerence of Sri Lanka in the recent past towards the Indian fishing boats fishing in their traditional fishing areas, as exhibited by a spurt of arrests and violence, is a worrisome trend.

The Government of Tamil Nadu, under my leadership, has challenged the issue of unilateral drawal of the IMBL leading to the ceding of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. We are agitated by incidents of repeated capture of our fishermen while pursuing their livelihood. We expect the Government of India to also respond and react pro-actively when incidents of this nature happen. Let Sri Lanka not be emboldened by your silence and construe it as a sign of weakness and indifference towards our fishermen.

I request you to urgently summon the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and lodge the Government of India's strong protest against the continuing arrests and incidents of violence against the fishermen of Tamil Nadu, including the recent incident of firing on an innocent fisherman. I also request you to advise the Sri Lankan Government to release the arrested fishermen of Rameshwaram without foisting any criminal cases and desist from future provocations through needless arrests and acts of violence.

I once again wish to convey my strong disapproval of the high handed attitude of Sri Lanka and seek your urgent intervention in this regard."

\*\*\*\*\*

Issued by: Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.  
Date: 14.3.2013.