

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 14.10.2015 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"Close on the heels of the arrest of 24 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and their 4 boats on 12.10.2015, which I have brought to your immediate personal attention in my letter dated 13.10.2015, it is shocking to know that 9 more fishermen who set sail from Nagapattinam fishing base in Nagapattinam District have been apprehended in the early hours of 14.10.2015, along with their boat by the Sri Lankan Navy. This is the seventh instance of arrest and remand of innocent fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy within a span of three weeks. With this latest incident of apprehension, the total number of fishermen from Tamil Nadu currently in Sri Lankan custody has risen to 87 and there are also 39 boats in Sri Lankan custody.

You will appreciate that these fishermen belong to the poorest sections of society and incarceration in an alien land means severe mental agony and loss of livelihood not only for the detainees but also for their beleaguered families. The entire fishermen community in Tamil Nadu is greatly exercised over the repeated instances of apprehension of our innocent fishermen while fishing in their traditional fishing waters in the Palk Bay. These continuous attacks should be countered effectively by coercive diplomacy. Our diplomats in Colombo should take up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka and take concrete steps to secure the immediate release of all the 87 fishermen and their 39 boats in Sri Lankan custody. The intervention should not only be at the diplomatic level but also at the highest political level. A strong message should be delivered to the Sri Lankan authorities that such unprovoked apprehensions should stop forthwith.

In the meantime, I request you to take immediate action to secure the release of our 87 fishermen and 39 boats currently in Sri Lankan custody.

I request urgent concrete action on this issue."
