

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 15.11.2017 of **Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

"I wish to draw your kind attention to an unfortunate incident of firing by the Indian Coast Guard at our innocent fishermen who were fishing in our territorial waters in the Palk Bay. It is reported that 6 fishermen from Rameswaram fishing base ventured out for fishing in a Mechanised fishing boat IND TN 09 MM 221 on 13.11.2017. It is reported that while fishing within our territorial waters, about 4 nautical miles from the shore near Olakkuda, around 3.15 P.M., an Indian Coast Guard ship named 'Rani Abaka' asked the fishermen to stop their boat for inspection and fired at the fishing vessel.

In the above incident, one fisherman namely Mr. Pitchai was injured in his left hand. A bullet was found in the fishing vessel and the same was handed over later to the Mandapam Marine Police Station. The fishermen also allege that the Coast Guard personnel got into the fishing vessel, manhandled them and hit them with sticks and iron rods causing physical injuries. One other fisherman Mr. Johnson sustained injury in his left shoulder. The injured fishermen are presently admitted in the General Hospital, Rameswaram and are undergoing treatment. The Mandapam Marine Police Station has registered a First Information Report on this incident vide FIR No.31/2017 on 14.11.2017 based on the complaint filed by the injured fishermen. This unfortunate incident has created panic and feeling of insecurity among the fishermen community of Tamil Nadu. The fishermen of Palk Bay region have decided that they will go on strike on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 against the action of the Indian Coast Guard.

You are aware that the fishermen of Palk Bay are often apprehended and their boats confiscated by the Sri Lankan Navy, while fishing in their traditional waters. The prolonged incarceration of our fishermen and impounding of their fishing boats by the Sri Lankan Government is already causing anxiety and insecurity among the fishermen community of Tamil Nadu. Further, such use of force towards our own fishers by Indian Coast Guard could have been avoided, if the Indian Coast Guard personnel had shown better restraint.

Hence, I request you to immediately intervene in this matter and advice the Ministry of Defence to avoid such incidents in future."

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**Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9**

**Dated : 15.11.2017**