

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 17.7.2012 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Dr.Manmohan Singh**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:-

"I wish to bring to your kind attention, an incident of death of a Tamil Nadu fisherman in the Dubai seas, due to shooting by an American US Naval ship on 16.7.2012.

The following fishermen of Ramanathapuram District had gone to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to work in a fishing boat on contract basis (daily wage basis) for eking out their livelihood and to support their families:

1. Thiru A.Sekhar, aged 25 years
2. Thiru M.Panduvanathan, aged 22 years
3. Thiru K.Muthukannan, aged 32 years
4. Thiru R.Muthumaniraj, aged 27 years

The above fishermen were reported to have been engaged in fishing in a civilian vessel (about 30 feet long) at a place called Jabel Ali, a frequent docking point for American Naval vessels, about 30 miles south-west of Dubai on 16.7.2012. Reports published in the media reveal that a security team on board the US Naval Ship 'Rappahannock' fired at their fishing boat using a .50-calibre machine gun at about 6.00 PM (IST) on 16.7.2012, after it "disregarded warnings and raced towards the ship".

I am pained to inform you that one of the fishermen A.Sekhar, belonging to Thoppuvalasai village in Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu, died due to the above mentioned shooting by the US Naval Ship. The other three fishermen, whose names are mentioned at Sl. Nos: 2,3 & 4 above, sustained bullet injuries and have been admitted in hospital for treatment.

I also wish to bring to your kind notice that, in a similar incident which took place in February, 2012, in the sea off Cochin, 2 fishermen, one belonging to Tamil Nadu viz. Ajeesh Bingo of Kanniyakumari District and another from Kerala were killed due to shooting by the Security Personnel on board an Italian Cargo vessel viz. "ENTRICA LEXIE". Efforts were then made by the Government of India to obtain compensation for the families of the deceased fishermen from the concerned Italian Merchant Ship Company.

I, therefore, request you to kindly take up this matter with the Governments of the United States and Dubai, UAE, to cause a detailed enquiry into the incident. I also request you to ensure that due compensation is paid to the families of the deceased and injured fishermen. The Indian Embassy Officials concerned may kindly be asked to render all necessary medical and other assistance to the injured. As the dead and injured fishermen are innocent fishermen who were conducting fishing in the sea only for their livelihood, please ensure that justice is rendered."
