

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 17.10.2018 of Thiru **Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

I am writing this letter with deep concern regarding a new development in which a Sri Lankan Court has imposed fine on our fishermen who were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy, while eking out their humble livelihood in the Gulf of Mannar. It is reported that eight Indian fishermen from Thoothukudi District of Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on 21.8.2018 along with their boat. They were convicted by a Sri Lankan Court under the provisions of Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act, purportedly for illegally fishing in Sri Lankan waters and imposed a fine of LKR 60 lakhs per head (approx INR 26 lakhs per head). The Court has also ordered that if in case the fine is not paid, they will have to serve a term of 3 months imprisonment.

I had, in my letter dated 7.7.2017 and subsequent letters, brought to your notice about the amendments made in the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, 1996 and Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act by the Government of Sri Lanka and its impact on our Indian fishermen, especially from Tamil Nadu.

The latest move by the Government of Sri Lanka to enforce the amendments made in their Act against the Indian Fishermen from Tamil Nadu at this crucial juncture when the Government of Tamil Nadu ably supported by Government of India has taken proactive steps for transition towards a permanent solution, is nothing but a mockery of the diplomatic efforts being undertaken by the Government of India to sort out the sensitive issue. This has created a sense of panic in the minds of fishermen of Tamil Nadu.

Hence I urge you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to register our strong protest at the highest level in Sri Lanka and organize an effective defense in the Sri Lankan Courts and to secure the release of our fishermen without imposing any fine or jail term. I also request you to ensure that immediate action is taken to secure the release of the all 16 Indian fishermen who are languishing in Sri Lankan jails. May I request your immediate intervention in this matter?

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