

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 19.6.2017 by Thiru Edappadi K.Palaniswami, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

"I write with concern on the apprehension of Indian fishermen of Tamil Nadu and the malicious intent of the Sri Lankan Government to put the life, livelihood and the inalienable traditional fishing rights of poor Tamil Nadu fishermen into jeopardy. It has been reported that 5 fishermen from Tamil Nadu who set out in a mechanised fishing boat for fishing on 17.6.2017 from Mandapam fishing base of Ramanathapuram District after a 61 day long fishing ban, were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy, while fishing in their traditional waters in the Palk Bay, in the early hours of 18.6.2017 and taken to Karainagar, Sri Lanka.

You would recall that our revered leader the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had written to you on a number of occasions, bringing to your kind notice the repeated instances of abduction and apprehension of innocent Indian fishermen from the coastal districts of the Palk Bay by the Sri Lankan Navy while eking out their livelihood in their traditional fishing waters. The repeated arrest and prolonged incarceration of our fishermen creates unrest among the fishermen community of Tamil Nadu.

I request the Government of India to undertake a strong diplomatic stand so as to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. My Government reaffirms its commitment to find a pragmatic working solution and had initiated several measures with the support of Government of India. This necessitates an urgent intervention at the highest level of Sri Lankan administration to avert these arrests of our fishermen and to release and return the fishing boats and equipment of our fishermen in a refurbished condition so as to win the confidence of our fishing community.

I sincerely urge you to take up this matter personally with the highest authorities in Sri Lanka and to bring the apprehensions at high seas to an immediate halt. I also request you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to secure the immediate release of 16 fishermen and 136 fishing boats including the 5 fishermen and their one mechanised fishing boat apprehended on 18.6.2017 without any delay.

May I request you to kindly direct the Ministry of External Affairs to speedily act in this issue?"

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