

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 20.8.2012 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, 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 notice, a worrisome incident of attack and harassment of innocent Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2012. Five Fibre Glass Reinforced Plastic Vallam boats belonging to Vellapallam and Vanavanmadevi fishing villages in Vedaranyam taluk of Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu ventured into the sea for fishing on 17.8.2012 and 18.8.2012 with 18 fishermen on board. When they were fishing in the sea at a depth of 15 fathoms near Vellapallam area on 18.8.2012, the fishermen in the above 5 fishing boats were brutally attacked by Sri Lankan Naval personnel who came to the spot in a boat bearing Number D-146. The Naval personnel, besides attacking the fishermen, seized their ice boxes, food and other fishing implements in the boats and dumped them into the sea. They also cut the nets laid by the fishermen. Serious injuries were inflicted on one fisherman, Thiru Kuppusamy, S/o Ramiah, with a knife on his right wrist, in addition to 7 other fishermen who sustained minor injuries due to assault with rubber rods. All the injured fishermen were given medical treatment in the Government Hospital at Nagapattinam on their return to the shore on 19.8.2012.

This incident is yet another instance of the high handedness of Sri Lankan Naval personnel who keep on targeting the poor and innocent fishermen of Tamil Nadu while they try to eke out their livelihood through fishing. I am distressed to once again have to point out that the incidents of harassment of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy simply continue unabated. I had already informed you in my letter dated 23.7.2012 that, unless the Government of India intervenes in this issue, there is every possibility of recurrence of such incidents in the coming months and this incident reinforces our apprehension.

The Sri Lankan Navy, emboldened by the soft handling of the issue by the Government of India, is attacking/harassing the fishermen of Tamil Nadu with impunity. The Statements at diplomatic level meetings of the two countries stating that "the use of force on fishermen cannot be justified by any means" remain only on paper and are honoured more in the breach by the Sri Lankan Navy, who seem to be making a mockery of the entire diplomatic process.

I, therefore, request you to kindly take up this issue strongly with the Sri Lankan Government and ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy strictly refrains from harassing Indian fishermen who conduct fishing in their traditional waters for their subsistence and ensure that such incidents do not occur in future.

I solicit your urgent action. "

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