

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 21.12.2016 of Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India :-

"I write with a deep sense of anguish about another three incidents of apprehension of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. It is reported that 5 fishermen in a mechanized fishing boat and 7 fishermen in a motorized country craft, who ventured into the sea for fishing from the Pamban fishing base of Ramanathapuram District were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 21.12.2016. Further, 2 mechanized fishing boats of Rameswaram and Mandapam fishing bases with 12 fishermen on board and one mechanized fishing boat from Jegathapattinam fishing base of Pudukottai District with 5 fishermen on board were apprehended in the evening of 21.12.2016 by the Sri Lankan Navy. These incidents have occurred just a day after the apprehension of 7 fishermen and their two boats on 20.12.2016. The fishermen have been reportedly taken to Mannar and Kankesanthurai in Sri Lanka and remanded to custody.

The recurrent instances of attacks upon and abduction of, our fishermen on the high seas in the Palk Bay should be stopped immediately. Our fishermen should be allowed to pursue their peaceful avocation of fishing in their traditional fishing waters of the Palk Bay. It is the consistent stand of the Government of Tamil Nadu that the Government of India should not treat the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) with Sri Lanka as a settled question as the constitutionality of the 1974 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement has been challenged on extremely valid and legal grounds by our revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, in her personal capacity, in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in W.P. (Civil) No.561/2008. Subsequently, the Government of Tamil Nadu has also impleaded itself in this case.

This livelihood issue of thousands of our fisherfolk needs your personal intervention. The alarmingly increasing frequency of apprehension of our fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy is a matter of utmost concern for my Government. An immediate intervention at the highest level is sought to resolve this longstanding issue.

I request the Government of India to act decisively in the light of the sensitive nature of this issue. I also request you to secure the immediate release of 51 fishermen and 114 fishing boats, including the 29 fishermen and their 5 fishing boats apprehended on 21.12.2016 without any delay."

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**Date : 21.12.2016**