

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Text of the D.O. letter dated 22.6.2017 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 am constrained to bring to your notice, yet again, the unabated instances of apprehension of innocent Indian fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. It is reported that, 4 Indian fishermen of Tamil Nadu along with their Mechanised fishing boat, who set sail for fishing from Jegathapattinam fishing base in Pudukottai District, have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 21.6.2017 and taken to Kangesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

The traditional and historical rights of our fishermen are continuously being denied consequent to the unconstitutional ceding of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka and the consequential loss of traditional fishing grounds of the Palk Bay area. Our revered leader, late Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had challenged the legal validity of the Indo - Sri Lankan Agreements of 1974 and 1976 in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, to uphold the rights of Tamil Nadu fishermen in the Palk Bay. The Government of Tamil Nadu subsequently impleaded itself in this case and hence, the very matter of International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) with Sri Lanka is sub-judice. I reiterate the stand of our revered leader late Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma that the retrieval of Katchatheevu back to India only will ensure the restoration of peaceful pursuance of livelihood by our fishermen in their traditional fishing grounds of Palk Bay.

I have earlier brought to your kind attention that long periods of impoundment and idling of the fishing boats without care will make them unworthy of sailing and unusable for our fishermen. This would subject the life and livelihood propositions of our fishermen into untold misery. I request the Government of India to impress upon the Sri Lankan Government to release all the fishing boats and gear and return them in refurbished condition to our fishermen immediately.

The immediate release of the boats will help our fishermen community to effectively utilise the recent initiatives rolled out by Government of Tamil Nadu and strongly supported by Government of India.

I once again request your personal intervention and direct the Ministry of External Affairs to urgently take up this issue with the highest authorities in Sri Lanka and secure the immediate release of 20 Tamil Nadu fishermen and 137 boats.”

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**Issued by: Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.**  
**Date : 22.6.2017**