

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 24.6.2017 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 wish to draw your attention to yet another outrageous incident of illegal abduction and detention of 8 innocent Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu. It is reported that 8 fishermen from Akkaraipettai Fishing base of Nagapattinam District ventured out in a mechanised fishing boat on 21.6.2017 for eking out their livelihood in their traditional waters of the Palk Bay. While engaged in fishing, they were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 23.6.2017 and taken to Kangesanthurai, Sri Lanka. It is pertinent to note that 17 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu along with their 3 fishing boats have been apprehended since our Tamil Nadu fishermen started their fishing operations after a 61 days long fishing ban.

The travails of innocent Tamil Nadu fishermen, who face harassment, abduction and detention at the hands of the Sri Lankan Navy, which continues in the traditional waters, has been brought to your attention repeatedly by our revered leader Late Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and subsequently by me. Things have come to such a pass that fishermen from Tamil Nadu are unable to access their traditional fishing waters for fear of being abducted or attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy. The entire fishermen community in Tamil Nadu is agitated by the repeated provocative actions of the Sri Lankan Navy through continued apprehensions.

Despite the issue having been taken up repeatedly by the Government of Tamil Nadu, we are yet to see an end to the problem of harassment and arrests of innocent fishermen from Tamil Nadu. These continuing illegal abductions in the high seas, have the potential to harm the joint initiatives of the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Government of India to bring about a permanent solution to this sensitive vexatious livelihood issue of our fishermen.

I request you to instruct the Ministry of External Affairs to register a strong protest with the Sri Lankan authorities about the continuing abductions in the Palk Bay and the prolonged detention of our fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy. I also request you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to take up the matter immediately with the Government of Sri Lanka and secure the immediate release of the 28 fishermen and 138 fishing boats from the Sri Lankan custody including the 8 fishermen and their boat which was taken into custody on 23.6.2017 by the Sri Lankan Navy."

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