

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 25.6.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India :-

"This is to bring to your notice one more incident in which 5 fishermen in a motorised fishing boat, who set sail from Vilundamavadi fishing base of Nagapattinam District on 21.6.2016, have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy on 23.6.2016. The boat drifted ashore to Valvettithurai, Sri Lanka, due to an engine snag following which the 5 fishermen were arrested and remanded by the Sri Lankan Government and their boat detained. This appears to be an inhumane act of arresting fishermen in distress at sea.

There are already 24 fishermen and 93 fishing boats of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu in Sri Lankan custody. The Sri Lankan strategy of not releasing the boats of our fishermen is causing great frustration amongst the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. I urge you to take this up with the highest authorities of the Sri Lankan Government and ensure the immediate release of the precariously berthed boats.

Denying our fishermen the right to peaceful fishing in their traditional waters of the Palk Bay to which they have a historical claim is causing considerable angst amongst the fisherfolk of Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu strongly reiterates the need to restore the traditional fishing rights of our fishermen in the Palk Bay by annulling the Indo-Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976. The constitutional validity of these agreements has been challenged on very valid legal grounds in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in W.P. (Civil) No.561/2008 by me and the Government of Tamil Nadu has subsequently impleaded itself.

I once again call for your personal intervention to secure the release of 29 fishermen and 94 fishing boats including the 5 fishermen in the motorised fishing boat apprehended on 23.6.2016 at the earliest. May I request you to instruct the Ministry of External Affairs to take urgent steps to secure the immediate release of fishermen and their boats from Sri Lankan custody at the earliest? "

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Issued by: Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.  
Date : 25.6.2016