

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 25.9.2015 addressed by Selvi J Jayalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:-

"I write this letter with a deep sense of anguish that close on the heels of the arrest of 15 fishermen in two fishing boats from Nagapattinam fishing base on 21.9.2015, the Sri Lankan Navy has apprehended six fishermen and their two mechanized fishing boats who went for fishing from Jegathapattinam fishing base of Pudukottai District. These fishermen have been taken to Kangesanthurai and remanded.

These innocent fishermen are the sole breadwinners of their families and engage in fishing in order to eke out a meager livelihood. Their arrest and detention will severely affect their families and dependants. As I have repeatedly pointed out, the right of livelihood of our fishermen to fish in their traditional waters of the Palk Bay to which they have a historical claim is infringed upon repeatedly and effectively by Sri Lanka. This is caused in no small measure due to the Government of India having entered into an ill-advised agreement, which ceded the islet of Katchatheevu, historically part of India's territory and undisputedly an integral part of India. The constitutionality of the 1974 and 1976 agreements has been challenged on extremely valid and legal grounds in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. I had personally filed W.P. (Civil) No.561/2008, in which the Government of Tamil Nadu had also subsequently impleaded itself.

I am also constrained to point out that the Sri Lankan Government is practising a strategy of impounding the boats and other fishing equipment while releasing our fishermen. Needless to say, without their fishing boats and equipment, the poor fishermen are driven into a poverty stricken state. As on date 28 fishing boats are already in Sri Lankan custody.

I request the Government of India to initiate decisive measures to find a permanent solution to this sensitive livelihood issue of our fishermen. I request your immediate and personal intervention to secure the release of the 21 fishermen and the 30 fishing boats in Sri Lankan custody."
