

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Text of the D.O. letter dated 26.6.2017 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 write to draw your immediate attention to a distressing spate of recent incidents of unprovoked attacks on and apprehensions of innocent Indian fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2017. The Sri Lankan Navy is persisting with its mid sea abductions of fishermen from Tamil Nadu from their traditional fishing waters in the Palk Bay, while peacefully pursuing their centuries old avocation.

It is reported that, 11 fishermen in two mechanised fishing boat who set sail for fishing from Rameswaram fishing base of Ramanathapuram district and 3 fishermen in a mechanised fishing boat who set sail for fishing from Kottaipattinam fishing base of Pudukottai district were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 24.6.2017 and taken to Thalaimannar and Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka respectively, in two separate instances. I reiterate that, in spite of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) between India and Sri Lanka being sub-judice due to the ceding of Katchatheevu islet, the Sri Lankan Navy is continuing its marauding attacks on and abductions of our fishermen in their traditional waters.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has repeatedly called upon the Government of India to use all diplomatic means to prevail upon the Government of Sri Lanka and reverse this trend. **These frequent instances which occur on an everyday basis in which our boats with innocent fishermen are being apprehended with impunity by the Sri Lankan Navy, has a demoralizing impact not just on the fishermen, but also on people of Tamil Nadu, who strongly believe that the fishermen have a genuine claim to the Palk Bay fishing grounds from where they are being apprehended.**

**Further, the Government of Sri Lanka has not released any of the fishing boats that were apprehended since January, 2015. The Sri Lankan Government's inhumane strategy of not releasing the boats of our fishermen is causing great loss of livelihood to the fishermen and their families. Our revered leader Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had continuously requested the Government of India to impress upon the Sri Lankan Government to release and**

**restore the fishing boats and gears in a refurbished condition as they have suffered heavy damages due to the prolonged detention, disuse and the onslaught of monsoon. There was wide expectation among the people of Tamil Nadu that the boats apprehended since 2015 would be released as an outcome of your meeting with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister in April, 2017.**

The alarming increase in the frequency of abductions by the Sri Lankan Navy is a matter of utmost concern for the Government and the people of Tamil Nadu. An immediate intervention at the highest level is sought to resolve this long standing livelihood issue of our fishermen. **You are also aware that the State Government is taking multifarious steps to convert the trawling boats to long liners and gill netters in the shortest possible period. But all transitions take time and the Sri Lankan policy of abduction of boats in this transition period without respite only indicates its increasing intolerant attitude and the scant respect for the Indian diplomatic efforts.**

I urge you to take this up with the highest authorities of the Sri Lankan Government and ensure the immediate release of the 42 fishermen and all the 141 boats including 14 fishermen and their 3 mechanised fishing boats apprehended on 24.6.2017. "

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

**Date : 26.6.2017**