

Text of the D.O. letter dated 28.10.2013 addressed by Selvi J Jayalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"I wish to draw your attention to an incident of the Sri Lankan Navy opening fire on an Indian fishing boat from Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. It is learnt that 6 innocent fishermen belonging to Rameswaram had set out in a mechanised fishing boat bearing registration number IND-TN-10-MM-756 to eke out their livelihood in the high seas. While they were fishing near Dhanuskodi around 1.30 PM on 26.10.2013, the Sri Lankan Navy menacingly approached them and without warning indiscriminately opened fire. The fishermen onboard narrowly escaped the bullets which pierced the wheel house of the fishing boat under attack and damaged the windscreen glasses of the wheel house. The frightened fishermen halted their fishing and fled in panic to save their lives.

This unwarranted, ruthless and inhuman attack on innocent fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu who were peacefully pursuing their traditional avocation has caused immense outrage and frustration amongst the fishermen community in Tamil Nadu. This incident clearly illustrates how the lives of our innocent fishermen are placed in danger by the hostile acts of the Sri Lankan Navy despite repeated assurances of the Government of Sri Lanka from time to time. The presence of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard who are to guard Indian nationals and our boundaries at sea has also not been a deterrent to the marauding acts of the Sri Lankan Navy.

This belligerent act of the Sri Lankan Navy is a sharp escalation of the actions of apprehension, detention and incarceration for long periods of time of innocent fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu. As you are aware there are already 75 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and 35 boats in Sri Lankan custody. This incident needs to be taken extremely seriously by you, Mr. Prime Minister, before the situation further escalates and more innocent lives are lost.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to unequivocally condemn this act of the Sri Lankan Navy and take up this matter personally at the highest level in Sri Lanka to ensure an immediate de-escalation of the aggressive posture adopted by the Sri Lankan Navy. The Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar are traditional fishing waters of the fishermen of the Southern Coast of Tamil Nadu and the Government of India must ensure that their lives, avocations and fishing rights are protected."

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