

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.975
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.03.2017

FISHERMEN AND BOATS IN CUSTODY OF PAKISTAN

975. SHRI DILIPBHAI PANDYA:
SHRI SHANKARBHAI N. VEGAD:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that 207 Indian fishermen are in the custody of Pakistan;
- (b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government for their release;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that ninety fishing boats are in their custody;
- (d) if so, what steps are being taken for release of those boats; and
- (e) whether government has any data of these boats released so far by Pakistani authority, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) & (b) As per available information, presently there are 301 fishermen who are Indian or believed-to-be Indian in Pakistan's custody.

The Government attaches high importance to the safety and security of the Indian fishermen and makes continuous efforts, including through diplomatic channels, for the early release and repatriation of the Indian fishermen in the custody of Pakistan authorities. Pursuant to Government's efforts, 218 Indian fishermen were released by Pakistan in January 2017.

Government continues to make regular efforts for the release and repatriation of remaining fishermen who are currently in Pakistan's custody.

(c) to (e) As per available information, there are around 897 boats belonging to Indian fishermen in Pakistan's custody. Pakistan, however, does not acknowledge the number of Indian Fishing Boats (IFBs) in their custody. Pursuant to Government's efforts, 57 IFBs were repatriated on 23 March 2015. In March 2016, a 4-member Indian delegation visited Karachi for inspection of 22 IFBs and to facilitate their repatriation. However, subsequent visit of an Indian delegation to take delivery of the boats has not materialised due to lack of response from Pakistan side.
