

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.171
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2022

INDIAN FISHERMEN IN CUSTODY OF PAKISTAN

*171. SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL:

Will the Minister of **External Affairs** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that still many Indian fishermen are in the custody of Pakistan as on 1st January, 2022;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by Government for the release of fishermen; and
- (c) whether any specific actions are being taken to get back the fishing boats?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

- (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. *171 REGARDING “INDIAN FISHERMEN IN CUSTODY OF PAKISTAN” FOR ANSWER ON 17.03.2022.

As per the India-Pakistan ‘Agreement on Consular Access’ signed on 21 May 2008, lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen of each country lodged in the jails of the other are exchanged on 1 January and 1 July of every year.

According to the lists exchanged on 1 January 2022, Pakistan has acknowledged the custody of 577 fishermen who are Indian or are believed to be Indian.

Government attaches the highest priority to the welfare, safety and security of Indian fishermen. As soon as cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistan are reported, immediate steps are taken by the Indian Mission in Islamabad towards seeking consular access from the Pakistan government. All possible assistance, including legal assistance, is extended to the fishermen for their early release and repatriation, along with the release of their boats. Cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistan authorities are consistently raised with the Pakistani Government and it is conveyed that this issue may be considered on purely humanitarian and livelihood grounds.

As a result of sustained efforts by the Government, 2140 Indian fishermen and 57 Indian fishing boats have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014. This includes 20 Indian fishermen who were repatriated from Pakistan this year, so far.
