

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1814**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2022

**INDIAN FISHERMEN IN PAKISTAN**

1814. SHRI KUMAR KETKAR:

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

- (a) special efforts made by Government to get Indian fishermen released and repatriated as more than 625 Indians primarily from the State of Gujarat are in Pakistan's custody;
- (b) any urgent plan to get the release of over 1200 Indian fishing boats seized by Pakistan;
- (c) efforts made to revive Joint Judicial Committee on Prisoners between India and Pakistan; and
- (d) whether there is any plan to see that Indian fishermen are not arrested by Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency in the mid-sea or near International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) & (b) 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 Pakistan 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.

(c) The 'India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners' comprising retired High Court Judges from both sides, to recommend steps for humane treatment of prisoners and fishermen and their expeditious release, was set up in 2008 by the Governments of India and Pakistan. The Committee, which is hosted by the two countries on an alternate basis, has had seven meetings so far, the last convened by India from 25-30 October 2013. The next visit is to be hosted by Pakistan. Response from Pakistan side to our request in this regard is awaited.

(d) As per available information, steps have been taken by the Indian Coast Guard to guide Indian fishermen not to cross-over the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) through various community interaction programmes for the fishing community. The Indian Coast Guard ships also shepherd the Indian fishing boats clear from the perceived IMBL to prevent their apprehension by Maritime Security Agencies of neighbouring countries. Indian Coast Guard ship/aircraft also maintain close surveillance at any given time along the India-Pakistan perceived IMBL. In addition, Government of Gujarat has specified no-fishing zone of five nautical miles along the notional IMBL.

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