

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-859
ANSWERED ON- 27/07/2023

FISHERMEN ARRESTED BY SRI LANKA

859. SHRI M. SHANMUGAM
SHRI VAIKO

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether incidents of attacks on Tamil fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy are increasing, including arrest of fishermen whose boats had repairs, recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of fishermen who were released and still in detention;
- (d) action taken by the India to deal with the situation;
- (e) whether payment of compensation to fishermen whose boats were damaged were considered, if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether meeting of Joint Working Group on Fisheries was called to discuss the issues threadbare and to find a permanent solution to the problem; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a to d) Indian fishermen are arrested from time to time by the Sri Lankan authorities for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in Sri Lankan waters. There are also some reports of incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy. Whenever reports of assaults on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy are received, the Government through diplomatic channel takes up the matter with Government of Sri Lanka. As per the available information, so far 2 attacks have been reported and 74 fishermen have been arrested this year. All the arrested fishermen have been released.

(e to g) Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has taken up the fishermen issues at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister in his meetings with his Sri Lankan counterparts. Sri Lankan Government has been requested to treat the fishermen issue as a humanitarian and livelihood concern, and it has been stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances.

Regular meetings of Joint Working Group Meeting on Fisheries are being held with respect to issues related to fishermen. Recent JWG on Fisheries was held in 2022 between both sides. The Joint Working Group discussed all relevant fisheries issues in detail including the concerns relating to fishermen and fishing boats which have been on the agenda of bilateral discussions between India and Sri Lanka.
