

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1392**  
ANSWERED ON- 14/12/2023

**LEGAL AID AND COMPENSATION FOR FISHERMEN**

1392. SHRI P. WILSON

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

(a) the details of number of fishermen from the State of Tamil Nadu arrested by Sri Lankan Navy and released during the last three years;

(b) whether the Ministry has taken any steps to offer legal aid services to fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy; if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry is considering offering compensation for death and injuries caused to fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy, if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government is planning to sign any MoU in order to bring permanent solution; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a & b) 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. Details of fishermen arrested/released are as follows :-

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of fishermen arrested</b>	<b>No. of fishermen released</b>	<b>No. of fishermen in custody</b>
2021	159	159	Nil
2022	268	268	Nil
2023	220	173	47

Whenever there are reports of arrest, officials of our High Commission in Colombo meet the detained fishermen and provide all necessary support including legal assistance.

(c to e) 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 purely 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 held with respect to issues related to fishermen, most recently in 2022. The Joint Working Group discussed all relevant fisheries issues in detail including the concerns relating to fishermen and fishing boats.

\*\*\*\*\*