

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1195**  
ANSWERED ON- 01/08/2024

**RELEASE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN DETAINED IN SRI LANKA**

1195. SHRI P. WILSON

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

(a) whether Government has taken any action with regard to Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu's letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 requesting the release of 80 fishermen and 173 fishing boats detained by Sri Lankan Navy and details thereof;

(b) the steps taken towards release of 40 Indian fishermen under judicial remand in Sri Lanka, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any steps to sign MoU in order to bring a permanent solution towards this issue concerning Indian fishermen, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a to d) As per the available information, Indian fishermen are apprehended for allegedly crossing International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in Sri Lankan waters. Currently, there are 83 Indian fishermen in the judicial custody of Sri Lanka; 4 Indian fishermen serving sentences and 169 Indian fishing vessels apprehended by the Sri Lankan authorities. Immediately after the reports of apprehension are received, our High Commission through diplomatic channels takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka. In addition, our consular officials meet the detained fishermen regularly and provide all necessary support including legal assistance to the apprehended fishermen. Our officials are working for the early release and repatriation of these fishermen.

Meetings of the Joint Working Group between India and Sri Lanka on fisheries are held to discuss issues related to fishermen. The last JWG on fisheries was held in 2022 between both the sides. The Joint Working Group discussed all relevant fisheries issues in detail including the concerns related to fishermen and their fishing boats.

As and when letters regarding the above subjects are received from political representatives or State Governments, it is the practice of the Union Government to apprise them of the current situation and the steps taken by our diplomatic Missions abroad.

The genesis of this issue goes back to the 1974 understanding between the then Central and State Government of Tamil Nadu. The current Union Government continues to address the resulting consequences with the humanitarian and livelihood concerns as its foremost priority.

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