

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1993**  
ANSWERED ON- 08/08/2024

**NEW POLICY TO PROTECT INDIAN FISHERMEN**

1993. DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS

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

- a) whether Central Government has initiated any new policy to protect Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu from being arrested, tortured & imprisoned by the Sri Lankan Navy in violation of all international treaties and bilateral agreements in the last one year;
- b) if so, the details thereof; and
- c) the status report on the initiatives taken by Bilateral Joint Working Group in the last one year to resolve the above said fishermen issue, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a to c) Indian fishermen are arrested from time to time by Sri Lankan authorities for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in Sri Lankan waters.

Government of India attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has been taking up fishermen's issues at the highest level with the Sri Lankan leadership. In July 2023, in the interaction between our Prime Minister and the President of Sri Lanka during the latter's official visit to India, issues related to the livelihood of fishermen were discussed and it was agreed to proceed with a humane approach. Further, the External Affairs Minister, during his recent visit to Sri Lanka on 20 June 2024, discussed this issue with the Sri Lankan leadership. During interactions, it has been stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances and that the issue be dealt with a humanitarian approach.

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

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