

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1670**  
ANSWERED ON- 13/03/2025

**REPATRIATION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN FROM SRI LANKA**

1670. DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has made any diplomatic efforts to bring back all the Indian fishermen imprisoned in Sri Lanka as undertrials & convicts;
- (b) if so, the details of the steps taken;
- (c) whether the Union Government has made efforts to bring back the valuable fishing assets including boats, nets which were confiscated by the Sri Lankan Navy; and
- (d) if so, the details of the steps taken?

**ANSWER**

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

(a to d) Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Concerted efforts of the Government have so far resulted in the release and repatriation of 591 Indian fishermen since 2024. Government has been taking up all fishermen related issues, including the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats, with the Sri Lankan Government through diplomatic channels, various official interactions and established bilateral mechanisms. This has also been taken up at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister in his recent meeting (16 December 2024) with the Sri Lankan President. In all our interactions, it is conveyed that the issues related to fishermen may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds and that the use of force should be avoided in all circumstances.

Further, our Mission and Consulates in Sri Lanka make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance.

Meetings of the bilateral Joint Working Group on fisheries, which includes representatives from the Government of Tamil Nadu, are held to discuss the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen. The last JWG on fisheries was held on 29 October 2024 during which both sides discussed issues related to fishermen.

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