

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1436  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.12.2017**

**FISHERMEN ARRESTED BY SRI LANKAN NAVY**

**1436. SHRIMATI K. MARAGATHAM:**

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Sri Lankan Navy has arrested seven fishermen from Mandapam and confiscated their two trawlers on charges of engaging in bottom trawling;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) whether it is also true that the Government of Tamil Nadu has urged the Union Government to get 60 fishermen of Tamil Nadu and 146 fishing boats released immediately; and**
- (d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?**

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]**

**(a) & (b) According to available reports, Sri Lankan Navy arrested 8 fishermen from Mandapam along with their two boats on the intervening night of 18-19 November 2017 for fishing in Sri Lankan waters.**

**(c) & (d) Government of Tamil Nadu has requested the Government of India to secure the release of apprehended fishermen and their fishing boats in Sri Lankan custody. The fishermen issues have been raised at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the latter's visit to India in November 2017. External Affairs Minister (EAM) had also raised the matter with the Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister during her visit to Colombo earlier this year. This also figured in EAM's discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka during the latter's visit to New Delhi in September 2017.**

**Following the 2+2 initiative in November 2016 when the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers of the two countries met in New Delhi, a bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) mechanism was institutionalized to address the fishermen issues. It was also agreed that Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries meet every six months to review the progress. So far three rounds of the JWG meeting have been held. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the JWG and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial meeting held on 13 October and 14 October 2017 respectively in New Delhi took stock of the measures taken by both sides to address the fishermen issues pending a permanent solution. As a result of sustained diplomatic efforts, Government has so far secured the release of 351 fishermen from Sri Lankan custody in 2017.**

**\*\*\*\*\***