

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.801  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2017**

**ATTACK ON FISHERMAN BY SRI LANKA**

**801. SHRI PR. SENTHIL NATHAN:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is in receipt of letters from the Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu regarding the frequent attacks by Sri Lankan Navy, harassing/arresting the fishermen of Tamil Nadu with impunity;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the Government's response in this regard;**
- (c) whether the Government has taken up this issue strongly with the Sri Lankan Government and ensured that the Sri Lankan Navy refrains from harassing Indian Fishermen and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (d) the measures taken by the Union Government in this regard?**

**ANSWER**

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

**(a) & (b) Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has written on a number of occasions to the Government of India highlighting cases of arrest of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities. Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government regularly takes up the matter of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats with the Government of Sri Lanka.**

**(c) & (d) 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. It was reiterated that Sri Lankan Government may consider the fishermen issue as a purely humanitarian and livelihood concern and both sides should ensure that there was no use of force under any circumstances.**

**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 347 fishermen from Sri Lankan custody in 2017.**

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