

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.556
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.12.2022**

CUSTODY OF FISHING BOATS IN FOREIGN LAND

556. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI:

Will the minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of Indian Fisherman and Fishing boats held under custody in foreign land during the last five years;
- (b) whether any steps have been taken for the release of the captured fisherman and their fishing boats;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether any procedure has been developed by the Government to deal with this recurrent issue in a timely manner; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) to (e) As per the information available with the Ministry, a total of 3936 Indian fishermen and 468 fishing boats were apprehended in foreign land during the last five years. Indian fishermen are generally apprehended by countries on charges of allegedly fishing in their territorial waters and cases are filed related to illegal fishing, trespassing, crossing the international maritime boundary line illegally, etc under the respective Acts of the particular countries. The Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats are reported, immediate steps are taken by Indian Missions and Posts to seek consular access, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation along with their boats. Consular Officers of Missions/Posts make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen lodged there and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance in deserving cases. Missions/

Posts abroad also approach the law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible. The focus of the Government's efforts is on securing the early release of fishermen.

Steps are taken regularly by the Indian Coast Guard to guide Indian fishermen not to cross the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) through various community interaction programmes for the fishing community. The Indian Coast Guard ships and aircrafts maintain close surveillance along the perceived IMBL and shepherd the Indian fishing boats towards Indian waters to prevent their apprehension by Maritime Security Agencies of neighbouring countries.

Given the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of this issue, the Government remains continuously engaged for early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with the fishing boats and has put in place bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.
