

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3925**  
ANSWERED ON- 24/03/2023

**INCIDENTS OF ASSAULT ON FISHERMEN BY SRI LANKA NAVY**

3925. SHRI A. RAJA  
SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI  
SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the increasing incidents of assault on fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy;
- (b) the number of individuals/groups of distressed Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu rescued from the India-Sri Lanka maritime boundary areas by the Government;
- (c) whether any diplomatic action has been taken by the Government against the latest incident of assault on Tamil fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy who came into Indian border in the recent past and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any FIR was filed against Sri Lankan Navy personnel involved in the assault and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether any compensation has been demanded from Sri Lanka for the injuries to the fishermen and illegal seizing of their boats and other materials and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a to e) Whenever there are reports of assaults on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy, the Government through diplomatic channel takes up the matter with Government of Sri Lanka. The last such occasion was on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 for assault on Indian fishermen and on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 for arrest of Indian fishermen.

Issues relating to Indian fishermen have been raised at the highest levels, including by our Prime Minister with the then Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held in September 2020. In 2021, during EAM visit to Colombo from 5-7 January, he met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to Indian fishermen. The issue was also taken up by the then Foreign Secretary's discussion with the Sri Lankan dignitaries during his visit to Sri Lanka from 2-5 October 2021.

On 15 January 2022, EAM discussed the issue of early release of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody, during his virtual meeting with the then Finance Minister of Sri Lanka. The matter was also discussed by him with the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries, during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2022. This was again followed up during his visit to Sri Lanka from 19-20 January 2023. Subsequently the matter was taken up by EAM with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister during the latter's visit to India on 4 March 2023.

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 and meeting of the Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries was institutionalized to address the fishermen issues with Sri Lanka. On March 2022, 5<sup>th</sup> Round of JWG was organized between the two governments where the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen was discussed.

Sri Lankan Government has been requested to treat the fishermen issue as a purely humanitarian and livelihood concern, and it has been stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances.

The Government is very cognizant of the concerns of our fishermen and consistently strives for their prosperity and safety. Our engagement with Sri Lanka on this matter reflects these objectives.

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