

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-273**  
ANSWERED ON- 21/07/2023

**ARREST OF INDIAN FISHERMEN**

273. ADV. ADOOR PRAKASH  
SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI  
SHRI RAJESHBHAI CHUDASAMA

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the Indian fishermen were arrested/attacked by foreign naval authorities including Iranian/Srilankan Navy for alleged violation of international sea border in the recent past;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of Indian fishermen imprisoned/cases filed in foreign courts against them during the last three years, country-wise;
- (c) whether the Indian mission in foreign countries has extended help for the detained fishermen in legal/judicial process and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of measures taken/being taken by the Government for release of fishermen?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a & b) The Government has received reports of arrests of Indian fishermen and apprehension of Indian Fishing Boats by foreign countries. With regard to Iran, Indian Embassy in Tehran has been informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran that 15 Indian fishermen have been arrested by Iranian authorities in the year 2023. With regard to Sri Lanka, it has been reported that 74 Indian fishermen have been arrested in the year 2023.

As per information available with the Ministry, the number of Indian fishermen imprisoned in foreign prisons, country-wise, in the last 3 years is tabulated below:

Country	No of Indian fishermen in foreign prisons (2020-22)
Iran	27
Sri Lanka	501
United Arab Emirates	5
Bangladesh	309

Bahrain	12
Myanmar	19
Pakistan	1060
Qatar	54
Saudi Arabia	564
Seychelles	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>2612</b>

(c & d) sThe 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.

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.

As a result of sustained efforts by the Government, 588 Indian fishermen have been repatriated this year, so far.

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