

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.656
TO BE ANSWERED ON **20.11.2019**

DETENTION OF FISHERMEN

656. SHRI K. NAVASKANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of fishermen from various districts of Tamil Nadu detained by Sri Lankan Navy during deep sea fishing, district-wise;
- (b) whether the Government is making any efforts to continue the dialogue with Sri Lankan Government on the issue of frequent detention of fishermen; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor ?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) to (c) Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. It has been Government's constant endeavour to secure the early release of the fishermen and fishing boats in the custody of Sri Lanka.

Government regularly takes up the matter of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen with the Government of Sri Lanka. With sustained diplomatic efforts, 2079 Indian fishermen have been released since May 2014. Currently, there are 04 fishermen in Sri Lankan custody. Diplomatic efforts are ongoing to secure the release of remaining fishermen and boats.

A Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries has been set up with Sri Lanka, as a bilateral institutional mechanism to help find a long-standing solution to all fishermen issues. It has also been 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 and two rounds of Ministerial meeting have been held. Government is in constant touch with the Sri Lankan side to schedule the fourth round of the JWG and the third round of Ministerial Meeting.
