

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.951  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2022**

**INDIAN FISHERMEN IN PAKISTANI JAILS**

**951. SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:  
SHRI SUBRAT PATHAK:  
SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV:  
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:  
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:  
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:  
SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken notice that 536 Indian fishermen and three civilian prisoners are still languishing in Pakistan Jails despite having completed their jail term and if so, the details thereof, year-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has called for release and repatriation of civilian prisoners along with their boats and accessories from Pakistan in exchange of the lists of prisoners and fishermen in India and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the date when civilian prisoners from both the countries were last exchanged under the 2008 agreement on Consular Access;
- (d) whether any warning system or International Border demarcation has been put to guide our fishermen and to desist Pak authorities not to capture our fishermen in Indian waters, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the specific steps taken by the Government to protect the fishermen/civilians who inadvertently cross Indian water and enter into waters of neighbouring countries and expedite their release ?

ANSWER

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

(a) As per the India-Pakistan 'Agreement on Consular Access' signed on 21 May 2008, lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen of each country, lodged in the jails of the other, are exchanged on 1 January and 1 July of every year. According to the lists exchanged on 1 July 2022, Pakistan has acknowledged the custody of 633 fishermen and 49 civilian prisoners who are Indian or are believed to be Indian. In this context, the Government has asked Pakistan to expedite the release and repatriation of all Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners, who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed and conveyed to Pakistan.

(b) Government attaches the highest priority to the welfare, safety and security of Indian fishermen. Cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistan authorities are consistently raised with the Pakistan Government and it is conveyed that this issue may be considered on purely humanitarian and livelihood grounds. As a result of

sustained efforts by the Government, 2160 Indian fishermen and 57 Indian fishing boats have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014.

(c) This year, 41 Indian prisoners were repatriated from Pakistan's custody, including the last instance of repatriation on 20 June 2022. During the same period, India has repatriated 24 Pakistani prisoners from its custody, including the last instance of repatriation on 13 July 2022.

(d) Steps are taken 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 Pakistani authorities.

(e) As soon as cases of apprehension of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistan are reported, immediate steps are taken by the Indian Mission in Islamabad towards seeking consular access from the Pakistan Government. All possible assistance, including legal assistance, is extended to the fishermen for their early release and repatriation, along with the release of their boats.

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