

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1026

ANSWERED ON - 25/07/2025

TAMIL NADU FISHERMEN ARRESTED BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

1026. DR. GANAPATHY RAJKUMAR P

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indians imprisoned in Foreign Jails country-wise as on date;**
- (b) the total number of fishermen from Tamil Nadu who were arrested and their fishing boats confiscated by the Sri Lankan Navy during the last three years;**
- (c) the total number of fishermen and boats which have been released from Sri Lanka during the said period; and**
- (d) whether about 29 fishermen from Tamil Nadu are still illegally held in Sri Lankan Jails and if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to bring them back?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of Indian prisoners, including undertrials, in foreign prisons at present is 10574. Country-wise list is placed at Annexure A. However, due to strong privacy laws prevailing in many countries, the local authorities do not share information on prisoners unless the person concerned consents to the disclosure of such information. Even countries which share information do not generally provide detailed information about the foreign nationals imprisoned.

(b) Information on the total number of fishermen from Tamil Nadu who were arrested and their fishing boats confiscated by the Sri Lankan Navy during the last three years are as follows:

| Year | No. of Tamil Nadu fishermen apprehended | No. of boats confiscated |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 2024 | 526 | 72 |
| 2023 | 220 | 33 |
| 2022 | 229 | 31 |

(c) Information on the total number of fishermen and boats which have been released from Sri Lanka during the last three years are as follows:

| Year | No. of Indian fishermen released | No. of boats released |
|-------------|---|------------------------------|
| 2024 | 538 | 02 |
| 2023 | 240 | 14 |
| 2022 | 268 | 01 |

(d) As of 15 July 2025, a total of 28 Indian fishermen are in Sri Lankan custody, of whom 27 are from Tamil Nadu and one fisherman is from Puducherry.

Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. The Government has been consistently taking up these issues, including the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats, with the Sri Lankan Government through bilateral mechanisms, diplomatic channels, and various official interactions, including by the Prime Minister in his recent meeting (05 April 2025) with the Sri Lankan President. In all our interactions, it has been conveyed that this issue may be considered purely on humanitarian and livelihood grounds.

All issues related to fishermen are also dealt with through bilateral institutional mechanisms such as the regular meetings of the Joint Working Group on fisheries, which includes representatives from the Government of Tamil Nadu. The last JWG meeting on fisheries was held on 29 October 2024.

Further, Indian Consular officials continue to make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen and provide requisite support and necessary legal assistance to ensure their welfare and assist with their early release and repatriation.

Annexure A

| Sr. No. | Country | Total number of Indians under trial and convicted in Foreign Jails at present |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Afghanistan | 8 |
| 2 | Angola | 1 |
| 3 | Armenia | 61 |
| 4 | Australia | 28 |
| 5 | Azerbaijan | 5 |
| 6 | Bahrain | 261 |
| 7 | Belarus | 9 |
| 8 | Belgium | 1 |
| 9 | Bhutan | 71 |
| 10 | Brunei Darussalam | 8 |
| 11 | Cambodia | 24 |
| 12 | Canada | 1 |
| 13 | Chile | 1 |
| 14 | China | 183 |
| 15 | Congo | 8 |
| 16 | Cote d' Ivoire | 5 |
| 17 | Croatia | 10 |
| 18 | Cuba | 4 |

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|------------|
| 19 | Cyprus | 21 |
| 20 | Denmark | 2 |
| 21 | Egypt | 1 |
| 22 | Ethiopia | 7 |
| 23 | France | 53 |
| 24 | Georgia | 24 |
| 25 | Germany | 81 |
| 26 | Ghana | 2 |
| 27 | Greece | 24 |
| 28 | Hungary | 4 |
| 29 | Indonesia | 25 |
| 30 | Iran | 11 |
| 31 | Iraq | 1 |
| 32 | Ireland | 7 |
| 33 | Italy | 162 |
| 34 | Jamaica | 1 |
| 35 | Japan | 4 |
| 36 | Jordan | 27 |
| 37 | Kazakhstan | 12 |
| 38 | Kenya | 4 |
| 39 | Kuwait | 342 |
| 40 | Kyrgyzstan | 4 |
| 41 | Laos | 6 |
| 42 | Lebanon | 3 |
| 43 | Madagascar | 4 |

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|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| 44 | Malawi | 1 |
| 45 | Malaysia | 380 |
| 46 | Maldives | 10 |
| 47 | Mali | 3 |
| 48 | Mauritius | 10 |
| 49 | Mozambique | 3 |
| 50 | Myanmar | 17 |
| 51 | Nepal | 1357 |
| 52 | Nigeria | 5 |
| 53 | Oman | 121 |
| 54 | Pakistan | 246 |
| 55 | Philippines | 59 |
| 56 | Poland | 14 |
| 57 | Qatar | 795 |
| 58 | Republic of Korea | 4 |
| 59 | Russia | 37 |
| 60 | Rwanda | 2 |
| 61 | Saudi Arabia | 2379 |
| 62 | Senegal | 5 |
| 63 | Serbia | 2 |
| 64 | Seychelles | 1 |

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|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 65 | Singapore | 138 |
| 66 | Slovenia | 2 |
| 67 | South Africa | 1 |
| 68 | Spain | 39 |
| 69 | Sri Lanka | 60 |
| 70 | Sudan | 1 |
| 71 | Switzerland | 3 |
| 72 | Tajikistan | 1 |
| 73 | Tanzania | 3 |
| 74 | Thailand | 58 |
| 75 | Turkiye | 4 |
| 76 | UAE | 2773 |
| 77 | Uganda | 11 |
| 78 | United Kingdom | 323 |
| 79 | USA | 175 |
| 80 | Uzbekistan | 3 |
| 81 | Vietnam | 6 |
| 82 | Yemen | 1 |
| | | 10574 |
