

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.55
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.07.2016**

INDIAN FISHERMEN IN FOREIGN JAILS

***55. SHRIMATI VASANTHI M.:
SHRI P. K. BIJU:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian fishermen apprehended/imprisoned and their equipments and fishing boats seized by forces by various countries, country-wise during the last three years;**
- (b) the time since when they have been imprisoned and the action taken to get them released along with fishing boats/trawlers/equipment and the success achieved in this regard;**
- (c) whether any meeting has been fixed with the authorities of other countries for amicable settlement of the issues; and**
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the other measures taken by the Government to help and safeguard the interest of these imprisoned fishermen?**

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)**

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE
LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 55 REGARDING “INDIAN
FISHERMEN IN FOREIGN JAILS” FOR ANSWER ON 20.07.2016**

(a) & (b) As per information available with the Ministry, the country-wise details of fishermen apprehended/imprisoned and the boats seized by the forces of neighbouring countries, along with details of their release are given in the Annexure.

(c) & (d) The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Our Missions and Posts regularly seek consular access to Indian fishermen detained in foreign countries, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation, along with their boats. Given the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of this issue, the Government has put in place several bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.

In case of Pakistan, we have a bilateral Agreement on Consular Access, signed in May 2008. The India-Pakistan Joint Judicial Committee, consisting of retired judges of superior judiciary from the two countries, visit jails in both countries, to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen on both sides, who have completed their prison terms.

In the case of Sri Lanka, our Mission works closely with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence, the Attorney General's Office and the law enforcement agencies concerned, to secure the release and repatriation of our fishermen. There is a Joint Working Group on Fisheries and a Joint Committee on Fisheries, which take up fishermen's issues for resolution on basis of the bilateral Understanding on Practical Arrangements of October 2008. In addition, talks are held from time to time between Fishermen's Associations in India and Sri Lanka.

In the case of Bangladesh, on receipt of information of the arrest of Indian fishermen, Mission contacts the concerned District Magistrates in India to ascertain their Indian nationality and thereafter pursue with the Bangladesh authorities for their release. For this, Mission seeks consular access from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and contacts local NGOs for their welfare during their imprisonment in Bangladesh.

Statement showing year-wise and country-wise apprehension of Indian fishermen and their release

Year	Bangladesh		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	No. of fishermen apprehended/ imprisoned	No. of fishermen released	No. of fishermen apprehended/ imprisoned	No. of fishermen released	No. of fishermen apprehended/ imprisoned	No. of fishermen released
2013	73	All released and repatriated	379	390*	676	403
2014	203		435	185	787	1060*
2015	397		370	335	454	360
2016	10		202 (Currently 261 persons, believed to be Indian fishermen, are still in Pakistan jails)	190	226	247*

(* This number also includes fishermen arrested in previous years and not released earlier)

Statement showing year-wise and country-wise seizure of boats and their release

Year	Bangladesh		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	No. of boats seized	No. of boats released	No. of boats seized	No. of boats released	No. of boats seized	No. of boats released
2013	5	All released	Not available		126	59
2014	17		57	57 boats were released in 2015	161	141
2015	27		34		71	87 + 1 (drifted boat)
2016	01		44	Release of 22 boats under process	40	-
