

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 632  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.12.2022**

**FISHERMEN HARASSED BY SRI LANKAN PERSONNEL**

**632. MS. S. JOTHIMANI:**

**SHRI S. VENKATESAN:**

**SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY:**

**DR. T. SUMATHY (a) THAMIZHACHI**

**THANGAPANDIAN:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the increasing incidents of Indian fishermen being apprehended/harassed and their fishing vessels being seized by the Sri Lankan Navy/authorities during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of Indian fishermen particularly from Tamil Nadu in captivity of Sri Lankan Navy/authorities along with the boats seized/destroyed during the said period, year-wise indicating losses incurred by fishermen as a result thereof;
- (c) the number of Indian fishermen shot by Sri Lankan personnel during the said period;
- (d) whether any steps are being taken by the Government to secure the release of the captured fishermen and their fishing boats/vessels;
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the diplomatic initiatives/steps taken by the Government to prevent such instances in future and check harassment of Indian fishermen; and
- (f) the financial assistance provided to the dependents/families of these fishermen during the said period?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

- (a) Indian fishermen are arrested from time to time by the Sri Lankan authorities for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and fishing in Sri Lankan waters.

(b) Details are given in the table below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Fishermen (from Tamil Nadu) arrested</b>	<b>Number of Fishermen (from Tamil Nadu) released</b>	<b>Number of Fishing boats (from Tamil Nadu) seized</b>	<b>Number of Fishing boats (from Tamil Nadu) released</b>
2019	190	All released	39	1
2020	74	All released	11	1
2021	143	All released	19	4
2022	219	198 released	30	Nil

(c) As per available information, in August 2021, there was an injury to one Indian fisherman due to alleged firing by Sri Lankan Navy.

(d) to (f) Our Consular officials visit the apprehended Indian fishermen to seek their welfare and provide them legal assistance along with food and other essential items.

Issues relating to Indian fishermen have been raised at the highest levels, including by our Prime Minister with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held in September 2020. In 2021, during his visit to Colombo from 5-7 January, External Affairs Minister (EAM) had met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to Indian fishermen. On 15 January 2022, EAM discussed the issue of early release of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody, during his virtual meeting with Finance Minister of Sri Lanka. The matter was also discussed by EAM with the Sri Lankan Minister of Fisheries, during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2022.

Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Following the 2+2 initiative in November 2016, when the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers of the two countries met in New Delhi, a bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) mechanism and meeting of the Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries was institutionalized to address the fishermen issues with Sri Lanka. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 5<sup>th</sup> Round of JWG was organized between the two governments where the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen was discussed.

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