

Re: Need to ensure release of Indian fishermen apprehended by Sri Lankan Navy

SHRI G. SELVAM (KANCHEEPURAM): The brutal attacks on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan navy is on the rise. With a deep sense of anguish, I wish to record three separate incidents that happened within a span of one month.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has written a letter to the Prime Minister on 13 March 2023, seeking his intervention for securing the release of 16 fishermen from Nagapattinam and Pudukottai, who were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on March 12.

This was the third incident within a month and frequent incidents shatter the livelihood of poor fishermen and also create fear psychosis in their mind. The fishermen were arrested for allegedly crossing the IMBL.

At present, 102 fishing boats are under Lankan custody and six boats that were released by Sri Lanka are yet to be repatriated.

Earlier, 16 Indian fishermen (6 fishermen from Tamil Nadu, 7 fishermen from Kerala and 3 fishermen from West Bengal) along with their mechanised fishing boat which ventured for fishing from Thengapattinam Fishing Harbour of Tamil Nadu were apprehended by the authorities in Diego Garcia of British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) along with their mechanised fishing boat.

In another incident, six fishermen belonging to Tharangambadi, Mayiladuthurai District were brutally attacked with iron rope by the Sri Lankan Navy personnel.

This attack is a blatant violation of all international norms and conventions.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to take up the matter with the concerned authorities using diplomatic channels so as to secure the release of all the Indian fishermen and their fishing vessel immediately.