

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-44
ANSWERED ON- 02/02/2024**

ATTACKS ON FISHERMEN

**44. SHRI HIBI EDEN
SHRI RAMALINGAM S.
SHRI S. VENKATESAN**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) whether the Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen in mid sea, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the number of times Indian Fishermen has been attacked by naval forces of neighbouring countries including Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the last three years;

(c) whether the Government has taken any stringent action against mid sea attacks on Indian Fishermen in the coastal district of Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai;

(d) the number of fishermen arrested/released by Sri Lankan Navy since, 2003; and

(e) whether the Government is aware of Indian fishermen languishing in foreign prisons, if so, the number of fishermen in jails of Pakistan and Sri Lanka and other countries along with the steps being taken by the Government to get these fishermen released?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)**

(a) The Government attaches highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Indian fishermen are generally apprehended by countries on charges of allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) illegally. Steps are taken regularly by the Indian Coast Guard to guide Indian fishermen not to cross the perceived 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 Maritime Security Agencies of neighbouring countries.

(b & c) There were 13 instances of attack on Indian fishermen by naval forces of neighbouring countries in the last three years. Whenever reports of assaults on Indian fishermen are received, the Government through diplomatic channel takes up the matter with the Government of the concerned country, including at the highest levels. Immediate steps are taken by Indian Missions and Posts to seek consular access, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation along with their boats. Consular Officers of Missions/Posts make regular visits to local jails and detention centers to ascertain the condition of Indian fishermen lodged there and provide requisite help and support, including legal assistance through Indian Community Welfare Fund. Missions/Posts abroad also approach the law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible. The focus of the Government's efforts is on securing the early release of fishermen.

The Government has put in place bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.

The concerned Government is requested to treat the fishermen issue as a humanitarian and livelihood concern, and it is stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances.

(d) The information available with the Ministry regarding the number of fishermen arrested/released by Sri Lankan Navy since, 2003 is placed at Annexure 'A'.

(e) As per the information available with the Ministry, there are 266 Indian fishermen in foreign jails [Bahrain – 10, Pakistan – 184, Saudi Arabia -31, Sri Lanka -25].

Annexure - A

Year	Number of Indian Fishermen arrested	Number of Indian Fishermen Released
2024	46	34 (12 from 2023 and 22 from 2024)
2023	240	243 (16 from 2022 and 227 from 2023)
2022	268	320 (68 from 2021 and 252 from 2022)
2021	159	131 (40 from 2020 and 91 from 2021)
2020	74	49 (15 from 2019 and 34 from 2020)
2019	210	205 (10 from 2018 and 195 from 2019)
2018	156	230 (84 from 2017 and 146 from 2018)
2017	453	420 (51 from 2016 and 369 from 2017)
2016	290	333 (94 from 2015 and 239 from 2016)
2015	454	375 (15 from 2014 and 360 of 2015)
2014	787	1045 (273 from 2013 and 772 of 2014)
2013	676	403
2012	197	197
2011	198	198
2010	26	26
2009	127	127
2008	1456	1456
2007	107	107
2006	19	19
2005	Nil	Nil
2004	109	109
2003	606	606
