

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1113  
ANSWERED ON:14.07.2004  
MALTA INCIDENT  
Khanna Shri Avinash Rai

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

- (a) the number of Indians killed in a boat capsized in December 25, 1996 which later on came to be known as Malta incident;
- (b) whether the families of those killed in the above incident were given financial or any other assistance by the Centre or concerned State Governments;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the persons responsible for the above incident have since been arrested;
- (e) if so, the details in this regard;
- (f) whether the Government had appointed any enquiry commission in that regard; and
- (g) if so, the details of the report of the said commission?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

- (a) On the basis of the testimonies given by the survivors of the tragedy, it is estimated that about 166 - 175 Indians died in the incident.
- (b) No compensation has been given to the families of the victims by the Central or State Governments because the victims of the Malta Boat Tragedy were engaged in illegal immigration into a foreign country without proper travel documents. The grant of compensation to the victims of the tragedy by the Government would have not only amounted to the condonation of their criminal activities but also supporting them overtly. However, the Punjab Government had made an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 50,000/- each to the families of the 79 victims of the tragedy, the details of which were provided by the survivors.
- (c) The Government has been giving every possible assistance in pursuing the interests of the victims and their families through Shri Balwant Singh Khera, Chairman, Malta Boat Tragedy Probe Mission. He has been requested to keep in touch with the concerned Italian legal counsel who has been representing the victims in a compensation case on claim-sharing basis.
- (d) & (e) Though some arrests were made by the CBI, the latest information on this point is not available.
- (f) No enquiry Commission has been appointed by the Government in this regard. Only a CBI enquiry was ordered.
- (g) Question does not arise.