

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:610

ANSWERED ON:08.07.2009

CAPTURE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN

Pathak Shri Harin;Pratapsinh Shri Chauhan Prabhatsinh;Singh Shri Brij Bhushan Sharan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether hundreds of Indian Fishermen and their fishing boats were captured by Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA) during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) If so, the details thereof including the number of fishermen and their boats, State-wise and year-wise;
- (c) the number of fishermen, civilians and prisoners of war released by Pakistan during the said period;
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government for the release of remaining prisoners lodged in Pakistani Jails; and
- (e) the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a)& (b) Yes. 356 Indian Fishermen were taken into custody by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) in 2006, 124 in 2007, 218 in 2008 and 199 in 2009. 58 boats were similarly taken into custody in 2006, 28 in 2007, 45 in 2008 and 35 to date in 2009. 556 Indian fishermen and 418 boats continue to be in the custody of the Pakistan authorities. The fishermen and boats are mostly from Gujarat and the Union Territory of Diu and Daman.

(c) to (e) Since 2006, 638 fishermen and 83 other prisoners have been released by Pakistan including those taken into custody before 2005. Pakistan has denied the presence of Indian Prisoners of War in its custody. Government has been taking up the issue of the release of fishermen and their boats regularly with Government of Pakistan including at the highest level. A judicial committee comprising of retired judges from India and Pakistan had also been set up to ensure expeditious release and humane treatment of prisoners in either country. The committee has held three meetings till date and has visited the jails in both India and Pakistan to meet prisoners and fishermen. A delegation from Fishermen Association of Gujarat visited Pakistan in October 2008 to verify the seaworthiness of these boats.