

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:287

ANSWERED ON:16.03.2011

RELEASE OF FISHERMEN BY INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Agarwal Shri Jai Prakash;Meghe Shri Datta Raghobaji

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan have agreed to release the fishermen under their detention;
- (b) if so, the number of the fishermen detained and released by both the countries during the last one year and the current year, year-wise;
- (c) the reasons for not releasing all the fishermen by India and Pakistan;
- (d) the number of fishermen in the jails of both the countries as on date; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken to release the remaining fishermen by both the countries?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO THE LOK SABHA QUESTION NO.287 REGARDING "RELEASE OF FISHERMEN BY INDIA AND PAKISTAN" FOR ANSWER ON 16.03.2011 In 2010, 454 Indian fishermen were released by Pakistan and 163 Pakistani fishermen were released by India. In 2011, India has released 20 Pakistani fishermen till date, while Pakistan has not released any Indian fishermen. Pakistan detained 100 Indian fishermen in 2010 and 56 Indian fishermen in 2011, while India has detained 85 Pakistani fishermen in 2010 and 32 in 2011. At present, there are 243 Indian fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails and 79 Pakistani fishermen in Indian jails.

Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue concerning all Indian prisoners, including fishermen, in Pakistani jails with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. Further, an India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners consisting of four retired judges from each side has been set up to recommend steps for humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners of the respective countries in each other's jails. The committee has so far had three meetings and has given several recommendations. Government of India has asked the Government of Pakistan to convene the next meeting of the Committee. Pakistan's response is awaited.

High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indians prisoners in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these prisoners. Once consular access is granted by the Government of Pakistan, the verification papers are sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Ministry of External Affairs for nationality status verification of these prisoners. High Commission of India, on a continuing basis, takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for the release of all those Indian prisoners who have completed their sentences.

The matter was raised with Pakistan at the Foreign Secretary Level talks on February 25, 2010 in New Delhi and again on June 24, 2010 in Islamabad. The issue was also raised during Home Minister's visit to Islamabad on June 25-26, 2010 and during Foreign Minister level talks in Islamabad on July 15, 2010. The issue of release of fishermen in each other's custody will also be addressed during the forthcoming Home Secretary/Interior Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan to be held on 28-29 March, 2011 at New Delhi.