

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:408

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2011

INDIAN PRISONERS IN PAK JAILS

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian prisoners in the Pakistani jails at present;
- (b) the number of such persons languishing even after completing jail term;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps in securing the release of these prisoners;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the time by which they are likely to be released ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) According to available reports, there are 662 Indian nationals in custody in Pakistan. Out of them, 219 are civilian prisoners, 369 Indian fishermen and 74 Missing Defence Personnel, including 54 Prisoners of War since 1971. Government of Pakistan has acknowledged the presence of only 72 Indian civilian prisoners and 237 fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails as on July 1, 2011. Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any Missing Defence Personnel in its custody.

(c) to (e) Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue concerning all Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. The matter was taken up at the Foreign Secretary level talks in February 2010, June 2010 and June 2011; in the Home/Interior Secretary level talks in March 2011 and Foreign Minister level talks in July 2010 and July 2011. Home Minister also raised the issue during his visit to Islamabad in June 2010. An India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners was formed on February 26, 2008 to make recommendations to the two Governments, which inter alia included immediate release of and consular access to fishermen, and exchange of a consolidated list of nationals in each other's jails. The Committee has met four times so far (February 2008, June 2008, August 2008 and April 2011).

High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these prisoners. Once the 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.

As a result of Government's efforts, Pakistan released 454 Indian fishermen and 19 Indian civilian prisoners in 2010. In 2011, as on date, Pakistan has released 103 Indian fishermen and 13 Indian civilian prisoners.