

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:36
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012
KILLING OF INDIAN FISHERMEN
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Tagore Shri Manicka

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some fishermen were killed in a firing by security guards of an Italian ship off the Kerala Coast recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up this matter with the Italian Government at the highest level and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether suitable compensation has been paid to the families of the deceased fishermen;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the steps taken for avoiding such incidents in future?

Answer

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

(a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 36 REGARDING 'KILLING OF INDIAN FISHERMEN' FOR ANSWER ON 14.03.2012

(a) & (b) Yes Sir. Two Italian naval personnel on board an Italian Merchant Vessel "Enrica Lexie" allegedly opened fire on an Indian fishing vessel on 15 February 2012 resulting in the death of two Indian fishermen on board an Indian fishing vessel off the coast of Kerala. The Italian merchant vessel is currently in Kochi. The two Italian naval personnel suspected of shooting at the Indian fishermen have been detained by Kerala police authorities and presented in the court.

(c) Yes Sir. This issue has been discussed by me with Italian Foreign Minister during his visit to New Delhi on 28 February 2012. The Italian Foreign Minister expressed regret at the loss of lives of the two Indian fishermen. The Italian side was told that the law of the land should be allowed to take its own course and the Indian judiciary being independent, free and fair would ensure a fair trial considering all legal aspects. The Italian Prime Minister, Mr. Mario Monti spoke to Hon'ble Prime Minister on 7 March 2012 expressing condolences for the loss of lives of the two fishermen. Hon'ble Prime Minister told the Italian Prime Minister that the Indian judiciary is free, independent and fair and would take into account all aspects of the law.

(d) & (e) All matters relating to this incident are currently sub-judice and being heard by the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala and also the Hon'ble Chief Judicial Magistrate of Kollam.

(f) An advisory has been issued by relevant authorities to all merchant vessels entering the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on the west coast that due to dense fishing activity, they are likely to encounter Indian fishing boats which should not be mistaken for pirate vessels and any suspicious activity should be reported to the Indian authorities immediately. Merchant vessels with armed guards on board should report the presence of guards to the Indian Navy and Coast Guard authorities while transiting through Indian EEZ. Internationally, at a Working Group meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia held in Washington on 28 February 2012, the Government of India stressed the need for transmission of details of armed security guards and their weapons deployed on merchant ships and information regarding any untoward incident within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the coastal state to the authorities of the concerned State.