

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2190  
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2012  
RELEASE OF INDIANS FROM SOMALI PIRATES  
Rajbhar Shri Ramashankar;Rajesh Shri M. B.

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of abduction of 17 Indians by the Somalian pirates;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to ensure the safety of their lives as well as for securing their early release and also to prevent such incidents in future?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) Yes. M.V. Royal Grace of Panama flag owned by M/s. Snow Whyte Energy Limited, Nigeria was reportedly hijacked by Somali Pirates on March 2, 2012, which had total 22 crew members, including 17 Indians, on board.

(c) Government is making all efforts through the concerned Ministries, agencies and our Missions abroad to pursue with the ship owners and others concerned to make efforts for early release of the Indian seafarers in captivity. Government has also constituted an inter-Ministerial Group to deal with any hostage situation arising out of hijacking at sea of merchant vessels with Indian crew on board.

Government has taken a number of measures to combat piracy, which include, providing naval escort to the ships in the Gulf of Aden, patrolling by naval ships in the piracy affected areas, coordination with navies of other countries, and through various multi-lateral, bilateral and multi-national initiatives.