

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2387
ANSWERED ON:27.08.2012
INDIAN CITIZENS UNDER CUSTODY OF PIRATES
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Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian citizens who are under the custody of Somalian pirates;
- (b) the details of measures taken by the Government for their release; and
- (c) the action taken by the Government to deal with the hostage issue?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN)

- (a): 43 Indian citizens are under the custody of Somalian pirates as on date.
- (b) & (c): The following initiatives have been taken by Government for the release of hostages and to deal with the hostage issue:-
 - (i) An Inter-Ministerial Group of Officers (IMGO) has been set up to deal with hostage situation arising out of the hijacking of merchant vessels with Indian crew on board.
 - (ii) The owners of flag administration of the hijacked vessels are contacted through Indian Missions abroad to ensure that they take suitable steps for the safety and early release of the hostages.
 - (iii) Guidelines have been issued for deployment of armed security guards on board Indian flag Merchant Ships. The Indian ship owners are, accordingly, free to deploy armed security guards.
 - (iv) Naval escort is provided to the ships in the Gulf of Aden. Besides, there are naval ships of different countries patrolling in the piracy affected area, which coordinate with each other through various multi-national and bilateral initiatives so as to combat the menace of piracy. The Indian Navy is providing enhanced vigil in the Indian EEZ and westward upto 65 degree east longitude.
 - (v) In addition, the following steps have also been taken in this regard:-
 - # Banning of sailing vessels to ply in waters south or west of the line joining Salalah and Male.
 - # Active participation of India in the International Maritime Organization, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and other international fora.