

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
SHIPPING  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3547  
ANSWERED ON:03.09.2012  
WELFARE TO SEAFARERS UNDER PIRACY BILL  
Antony Shri Anto

**Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has any record of Seafarers being held hostage by sea pirates;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to provide any assistance including financial assistance to the victim's families;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken to ensure the safety and welfare of the seafarers?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. As on date, there are 43 Indian Seafarers held as hostages as per the details indicated below:

Sl.No.	Name of the ship	Flag	No. of Indian crew	Date when held as hostages hijacked
--------	------------------	------	--------------------	-------------------------------------

1.	M.V. Iceberg I	Panama	6	29.03.2010
2.	Ex-M.T. Asphalt Venture	Panama	7	29.09.2010
3.	M.V. Albedo	Malaysia	2	26.11.2010
4.	M.V. Royal Grace	Panama	17	02.03.2012
5.	M.T. Smyrni	Liberian	11	10.05.2012

Total            43

(c) & (d): The Government has released an amount of Rs. 2.50 lakhs to the families of each of the 6 Indian seafarers held hostage by Somali Pirates of the hijacked vessel M.V. Iceberg I.

(e): The following initiatives have been taken by Government to ensure the safety and welfare of the seafarers:-

(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. India is also an active participant in the International Maritime Organization, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and other international fora.

(ii) The owners and 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) Sailing vessels have been banned from plying in waters south or west of the line joining Salalah and Male.