

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4300
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2012
HOSTAGES WITH SOMALIAN PIRATES
Barq Shri Shafiqur Rahman;Yadav Shri Madhusudan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Indian sailors held hostage by the Somalian pirates since March this year are yet to be released;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the efforts made/being made by the Government to get them released?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Yes. The following two merchant vessels with Indian sailors on-board have been hijacked since March 2012:

(i) MT Royal Grace (old name Royal Lady), a Panama flagged vessel, was reportedly hijacked on 2 March, 2012 by Somali pirates. The Ship is reported to have 17 Indians among its 22 member crew. The vessel and hostages continue to be under captivity of Somali pirates.

(ii) MT Smyrni, a Liberian-flagged vessel, was hijacked by Somali pirates on 10 May, 2012 and has 26 crew which include 11 Indians, 4 Filipinos and 1 Romanian. The vessel and hostages are still under the captivity of Somali pirates.

(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.