

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:55  
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2013  
RELEASE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN  
Pathak Shri Harin

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

- (a) the total number of Indian fishermen and their boats in the custody of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at present, State-wise including Gujarat;
- (b) the details of the steps taken/being taken by the Government to secure release of these fishermen; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to rehabilitate fishermen and their families whose boats have been confiscated by neighbouring countries?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 55 REGARDING "RELEASE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN" FOR ANSWER ON 07.08.2013

From time to time, Government receives reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by our neighbouring countries for alleged violations of their territorial waters.

As on date there are 437 fishermen believed to be Indian in Pakistan's custody belonging to Andhra Pradesh (2 persons), Bihar (2 persons), Dadar & Nagar Haveli (3 persons), Daman & Diu (17 persons), Gujarat (391 persons), Maharashtra (17 persons), Uttar Pradesh (4 persons) and West Bengal (1 person). Pakistan authorities have provided Consular Access to all 437 fishermen; nationality status has been confirmed for 378 fishermen for whom official requests for early release and repatriation have been made. There are also over 740 Indian fishing boats in the custody of Pakistani, but no boats have been returned in the last five years.

As per available information there are presently, 114 Indian fishermen, along with 21 vessels in the custody of Sri Lanka. There are no Indian fishermen in the custody of Bangladesh.

Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has been consistently taking up the issue concerning the release of all Indian fishermen and their boats in Pakistani custody with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. Our High Commission in Islamabad is in regular touch with the concerned Pakistani authorities for securing immediate Consular Access (CA) when any information is received about arrest of an Indian fisherman. Concerned Pakistani authorities are also reminded regularly for release of all fishermen who have completed their prison terms. Necessary travel documents are provided promptly by the High Commission to facilitate repatriation of fisherman as and when they are released by Pakistan authorities.

As soon as reports of apprehensions of Indian fishermen are received Government through diplomatic channels, immediately and consistently takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure an early release and repatriation of apprehended Indian fishermen.

The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries) is the nodal agency for payment of compensation to the fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails and the scheme - 'Soft Loan Package for Replacement of Fishing vessels held in captivity in Pakistan' is being implemented by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).