

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4248

ANSWERED ON:16.12.2009

FISHERMEN IN PAK JAILS

Hamsrajbhai Shri Radadiya Vitthalbhai ;Vasava Shri Mansukhbhai D.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the State Government of Gujarat has written a letter requesting his Ministry to get Indian fishermen released from Pakistani jails ;
- (b) if so, the number of letters written by the Gujarat Government in this regard during the last three years; and
- (c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) & (b) In the last three years, the State Government of Gujarat has informed this Ministry on several occasions of the capture of Indian fishermen and their fishing boats by Pakistani authorities. Such communications also contain requests to expedite the release of Indian fishermen and their boats from Pakistani custody. In addition, a number of Members of Parliament from Gujarat, and Members of Legislative Assembly of Gujarat have also written to this Ministry in this regard in the last three years.

(c) Government of India has been making persistent efforts for the release of Indian fishermen and their boats from Pakistan. An India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners was formed on 26 February 2008. The Committee made recommendations to the two Governments, which inter alia, included immediate release of and consular access to fishermen, and exchange of a consolidated list of nationals in each other's jails. The Committee visited jails in Pakistan in June 2008 and jails in India in August 2008. It also held its meetings during these visits. In its last meeting held in India in August 2008, the Committee again recommended, inter alia, immediate release and repatriation of all prisoners to their respective countries who had completed their sentences and whose nationality had been confirmed. Pakistan released 34 Indian fishermen in August 2008, and another 99 fishermen in November 2008. India had released 14 Pakistani fishermen in its jails in May 2008 in pursuance of the committee's recommendations. The issue of release of remaining Indian fishermen and their boats from Pakistan's custody is regularly taken up by the Government with the Government of Pakistan.