

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4820  
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2015  
INDIAN FISHERMEN HELD CAPTIVES  
Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam

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

- (a) whether as per reports, several fishermen from Tamil Nadu who were stranded in Saudi Arabia were ill treated by their employers;
- (b) if so, the facts and details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the concerned country for the safe return of these fishermen to India; and
- (d) if so, the response of the Saudi Government in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) A group of 22 Indian fishermen (16 from Tamil Nadu and 6 from Puducherry) came to Saudi Arabia in September – October 2013 to work with Mr. Jamil, a Saudi national. Later, the fishermen left the sponsor, alleging non-payment of agreed salary / sharing of profit, verbally agreed upon on a 50:50 basis, and also ill-treatment by the employer. According to the fishermen, there was no written agreement / contract between them and their sponsor. As per the fishermen, the sponsor did not honour this verbal agreement, and had been paying only Saudi Riyals 500 – 600 every month. Therefore, the fishermen stopped working with the Saudi sponsor, and lodged a complaint regarding their grievances with the labour court in Jubail.

(c) & (d) Embassy officials had visited Jubail and met with the fishermen as well as their sponsor. Food and accommodation for these fishermen was arranged in Jubail with the help of the local Indian community / Embassy volunteers. The issue was taken up with the concerned Saudi authorities, including the Jubail Governor and the Director of the Jubail labour office. Subsequently, on the basis of applications received from these fishermen, emergency travel documents were issued by the Embassy to all the 22 fishermen and the Saudi Deportation Centre in Dammam had granted 'Exit' visas to these fishermen. All the 22 fishermen reached India on 31 January 2015.