

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1537  
ANSWERED ON:29.07.2015  
Agreement with Sri Lanka regarding Fishermen  
Chandrakasi Shri M.

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

- (a) whether any agreement has been reached with the Government of Sri Lanka regarding release of boats of Indian fishermen seized by the Sri Lankan Navy;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the detained-boats released and handed over to the Indian fishermen since then;
- (c) the details of boats which are still with Sri Lanka and the steps taken for release of such boats; and
- (d) the details of boats of foreign countries including that of Sri Lanka seized/detained and released by Indian Government?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (c) There are several bilateral institutional mechanisms in place to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and Sri Lanka, including practical arrangements to deal with the fishermen issue. Government attaches the highest importance to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. As soon as reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities are received, Government, through diplomatic channels, immediately takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with their vessels. As per available information, the number of Indian fishermen apprehended by Sri Lankan Navy in 2012 was 197, in 2013 it was 676 and in 2014 it stood at 787. Due to Government's steadfast efforts, all these fishermen were subsequently released and repatriated to India. Since January 2015, a total of 217 Indian fishermen have been apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities and there are 31 vessels belonging to Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody. Due to efforts of the Government, 177 of the apprehended 217 Indian fishermen have been released and repatriated. Government remains engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure the expeditious release and repatriation of 40 Indian fishermen and 31 vessels which are currently in Sri Lankan custody.

(d) As per information available, presently, there are 5 Sri Lankan fishermen and 5 Sri Lankan vessels in Indian custody. Since January this year, Indian authorities have apprehended 33 Sri Lankan fishermen and 6 Sri Lankan vessels of which 28 fishermen and 1 vessel have already been released and repatriated. There are also 92 vessels belonging to Pakistani fishermen in Indian custody. There has been no release of Pakistani vessels, so far, in the year 2015. India has released 111 Bangladeshi fishermen and 5 vessels in 2015. Presently, there are no Bangladeshi fishermen or vessels in Indian custody.

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