

Title: Regarding killing of the three innocent Tamil fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy on 29th April, 2000.

SHRI VAIKO : Mr. Deputy-speaker Sir, I request my colleagues to kindly cooperate to allow me to speak. ...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, I am very grateful to you for permitting me to raise a very serious issue concerning the lives of the citizens of this country. Sir, on 29th April, just two days ago, the Sri Lankan Navy encroached into the territorial waters of our country and brutally killed three innocent Tamil fishermen who died on the spot.

Three more Tamil fishermen were mortally wounded. Three fishermen - Munusamy, Kumar and Anchappan – were killed on the spot. Lives of three other fishermen – Velusamy, Hirichandran and Chandrasekhar – are in deep peril.

Sir, this has been going on for the last two decades. The Sri Lankan Navy has been coming into our own territorial waters, killing the fishermen of our country and destroying their boats and fishing nets. By such attacks our fishermen are totally deprived of their livelihood. More than 780 such incidents have taken place in the past twenty years. It is not an ordinary matter when the life of a citizen of this country is taken away by the Navy of another country. It is a very grave issue. People in the entire coastal area of Tamil Nadu are agitated over this issue. All the political parties in Tamil Nadu have issued statements in the past two days over this incident. Fishermen throughout the coastal area in the State are in deep apprehension that they could not go for fishing while that is the only livelihood for them.

Therefore, Sir, it is high time the Government of India took up this issue very seriously with the Sri Lankan Government. They should be given a stern warning. Our condemnation of this incident should be expressed to Sri Lankan Government. Hon. Minister of Defence is sitting here. We have our Navy and Coast Guards Organisation. When Sri Lankan Navy trespasses into our own waters, attacks and kills our fishermen, our Coast Guards should not remain idle spectators. I remember that two years back they came by a helicopter and dropped a bomb on one of our fishing boats as a result of which bodies of Tamil fishermen were shattered into pieces. Their flesh and bones were floating in the sea. I myself went to Arghattuturai. This is the situation there.

I would request the Government of India to take up the issue very seriously through all means including the diplomatic channels and give a stern warning to the Sri Lanka Government. Our Navy also should be on alert. Our Coast Guards should take steps to protect our fishermen from such attacks. Proper compensation for the aggrieved families should be obtained from the Sri Lankan Government. Already more than 15 fishermen are languishing in Sri Lankan jails. I would request the Government of India to take up the matter very seriously and put an end to such barbaric attacks on our fishermen.

SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN (NAGAPATTINAM): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is with great sorrow that I state the following regarding the atrocities of the Sri Lankan Navy against the poor fishermen of my constituency.

Last week while fishermen from Akkaraipet in Nagapattinam were fishing in Indian waters of Bay of Bengal, the Sri Lankan Navy fired at them indiscriminately killing three persons – Kumar (26 years), Anchappan (45 years), and Munusamy (26). Three other fishermen including Velusamy (28 years) are seriously injured and are still undergoing treatment.

Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has granted Rs.1 lakh each to the families of the fishermen killed and Rs.10,000 each to the injured fishermen.

The incidents of attacks on fishermen, whose only source of income is fishing, have been happening for a long time. In my recent letters I have already drawn attention to the sufferings of the fishermen. The lives of fishermen in Tamil Nadu have become totally uncertain now. The toll taken by such incidents in the recent past is as follows:

Year	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
1993	4	5	8
1994	6	8	7
1995	1	5	-
1996	3	2	5
1997	3	5	7
1998	1	1	2

1999	2	-	3
2000	6	3	6

Thus the number of such incidents is on the rise. The people in my constituency are very much agitated over these incidents.

Therefore, Sir, I request the Government to take immediate steps and ensure the safety of the fishing community. Thank you....(*Interruptions*)