

Title: Need to secure release of Indian soldiers prisoned in Pakistan.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (CHANDIGARH): Madam Chairperson, relatives of 54 Indian soldiers reported to be missing during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war have, for the last three decades, continued to struggle ceaselessly for their return.

It was a letter from a Pakistani prison, sometimes after the historic release of 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and return of 616 Indian soldiers that sent a clear message that some of the Indian soldiers had not been released by Pakistan. Ever since then, relatives of these unfortunate soldiers have gathered more evidence about their languishing in Pakistani jails, denials by Pakistan notwithstanding.

They have undergone untold suffering and agony but have moved on relentlessly with fortitude hoping that one day the Government will secure their release. Some initiative was taken by our Government during 1985-89, but things have not changed. Thirty years is a long period. The release of 54 soldiers taken captive during the 1971 war must be accorded top priority by the Government and all diplomatic means deployed for their release.

I urge upon the Government to take necessary action in this matter.