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Title: Issue regarding increasing incidents of hijacking the boats and ships.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (THRISSUR): Hon. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to you for this opportunity. I have received appeals from the family members of sailors from Kerala, who have been held captive in the recent episode of the hijacking of "M.T. Royal Grace", a cargo ship, the Panama flagged oil tanker on the 2nd of March, 2012. I have represented this appeal before the hon. Minister of Shipping, Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and the Director General of Shipping. I am also in constant touch with the nodal officers of the Directorate General of Shipping who have been appointed to intervene in this episode. They have cited their helplessness in tracing the whereabouts of the Nigerian owner of the vessel. In the meanwhile, there have been frantic telephone calls from one of the sailors to his family members giving the contact telephone number of the owner of the ship and that of the pirates to pressurize for payment of ransom.

The frantic calls are being received by the family members of the people, the Indian citizens who are held captive in the ship that the food stock is over, water is over and they are starving. Nearly, 232 people are held hostage by Somalian pirates and out of that 35 are Indians, according to information available. We are the fourth largest Navy in the world. Many countries are taking very strong measures against this hijacking by the pirates.

Unfortunately, India has become a silent onlooker on this serious development. Every other day a ship is being taken by the hijackers. There are many Indian nationals on the ship. There is absolutely no system, no machinery from the Government side to establish a dialogue with the hijackers or to take action by the Navy. Unfortunately, India has become a very soft target. Many Indian vessels and also vessels of the other countries are being hijacked. The incidence of hijacking is on the increase. I request the hon. Leader of the House, the Government of India to take action. Our citizens are in danger. When citizens of other countries are involved, we are seeing how much seriousness they are showing. Even recently, some foreign ship was involved near Kerala coast. When their citizens are in danger, the entire team of the Cabinet and Ministers are coming here to argue for them. When Indians are hijacked and they are in danger, when their lives are in danger, there is no body to intervene on behalf of them. The parents of the children who are there, two are from my constituency Thrissur. They are calling me everyday. What answer can I give to them? I have knocked at the doors of all the Government officers, concerned Government Ministries and people like that. But in our Ministry, in our Government, there is nobody who is in a position to give us even information. The unfortunate part is that 35 Indians are in captivity for the last many months.

I wish that the Government takes strong action either to negotiate or to intervene. Many other countries, when such situation comes, their Navy intervenes to free the vessels. I do not suggest that there should be a naval action. But our citizens should be rescued by some means. I wish the Government takes some initiative. This is an agonizing situation. We, the peoples' representatives, in spite of our best efforts, are not able to tell the parents who are in distress, even a valid information about what has happened to their children. We are not able to convey to them whether their children are alive or dead. I wish the Government takes an early action in this matter....(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri Bansa Gopal Chowdhury. Please send your names.

...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing else will go on record.

(*Interruptions*) * _

MADAM SPEAKER:

Shrimati Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi,

Shri Virendra Kumar,

Shri Ashok Argal,

Advocate A. Sampath,

Shri P.L. Punia,

Shri Rajendra Agawal,

Prof. (Dr.) Ram Shankar Katheria,

Shri M.B. Rajesh,

Shri Neeraj Shekhar and

Shri Surendra Singh Nagar are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri P.C. Chacko.