

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1440
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.12.2018

INDIAN FISHERMEN ARRESTED BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

1440. DR. P. VENUGOPAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- a) whether seventeen Indian fishermen were arrested on 31.10.2018 by the Sri Lankan Navy for fishing off Neduntheevu;
- b) if so, the details thereof;
- c) whether their boats were also impounded by the Sri Lankan Navy; and
- d) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) Seventeen Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu along with their three fishing vessels were arrested by Sri Lankan Navy on 29 October 2018, off Delft Island for crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line and fishing in Sri Lankan territorial waters. These fishermen were produced before the Kayts Magistrate Court on 01 November 2018. Consulate General of India in Jaffna arranged for an Attorney to represent these fishermen before the Court. During the trial, the Judge declared the fishermen guilty and sentenced them to two years rigorous imprisonment for their unlawful entry into Sri Lanka and fishing in Sri Lankan territorial waters. However, their sentence was suspended for five years and they were released. In case these Indian fishermen re-enter the Sri Lankan waters and get arrested by Sri Lankan Navy once again, they would have to serve the sentence awarded to them. After their release, the High Commission of India in Colombo issued Emergency Certificates to these fishermen and they were repatriated to India by flight from Colombo to Madurai on 15 November 2018.

(c) & (d) The three fishing vessels are currently detained at the Karainagar Naval Station of the Sri Lankan Navy, pending claim inquiry by the Kayts Magistrate Court, which has been fixed on 25 January 2019. During the claim inquiry, the owners of these three fishing vessels have to appear in person before the Court to prove that these boats did not intentionally cross over to the Sri Lankan territorial waters. High Commission of India in Colombo is facilitating an attorney to represent the owners of these three fishing vessels in the Court during the enquiry.
