

Need to impress upon the Sri Lankan Government to release the Tamil fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy.-laid

DR. T. SUMATHY ALIAS THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the continued arrest of Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, causing grave humanitarian distress to coastal communities. On 21 January 2026, the SriLankan Navy arrested seven fishermen from Nagapattinam District of the Kodiyakkarai coast, alleging crossing of the International Maritime Boundary Line. Their fishing boats were seized and towed to the Kankesanthurai naval base, and the fishermen were handed over to Sri Lankan Fisheries authorities. This incident is part of a disturbing pattern in January 2026 alone. On 13 January, ten fishermen from Rameswaram were arrested near Neduntheevu, and on 1 January, eleven fishermen from Karaikal were taken into custody near Kodiyakkarai. In all these cases, boats were seized and the fishermen remanded or remain in custody. These repeated arrests during the Pongal season, a critical livelihood period for fishing communities, have intensified anxiety among families and disrupted traditional fishing activity. Small-scale fishermen, who rely on seasonal income and inherited fishing routes, are bearing the brunt of unresolved maritime and diplomatic issues. I request the Union Government, particularly the Ministry of External Affairs, to urgently intervene for the early release of all detained fishermen, ensure the return of seized boats, and pursue a sustained diplomatic mechanism with Sri Lanka to prevent recurrence of such incidents and protect the livelihood and safety of Tamil Nadus fishermen.