

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2007

ANSWERED ON:23.07.2014

ARREST OF INDIAN FISHERMEN

Chavan Shri Harishchandra Deoram;Khan Shri Md. Badariddoza;Kumar Shri P.;Venugopal Dr. Ponnusamy

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a group of Indian fishermen was recently arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of illegal fishing in their territorial waters;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether the Government has taken up this issue with Sri Lanka;
- (d) if so, the response of Sri Lanka thereto; and
- (e) whether the Government has any proposal to find a permanent solution to this issue and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) As on 18 July 2014, there are 5 Indian fishermen alongwith 47 Indian fishing vessels under the custody of Sri Lankan authorities on charges of fishery related violations. The Government, as a result of its continuous efforts, has secured the release of all 197 Indian fishermen arrested in 2012, all 676 Indian fishermen arrested in 2013 and 536 Indian fishermen arrested till 18 July 2014 from the custody of Sri Lanka.

(c) to (e) Government attaches the highest importance to the welfare, safety and security of our fishermen. As soon as reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy are received, the Government, through diplomatic channels, takes up the matter with the relevant Sri Lankan authorities. Keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of the issue, Government has impressed on the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint, not to fire on our fishermen and treat our fishermen in a humane manner. The matter has been taken up during meetings at various levels, including the recent meeting between PM and Sri Lankan President in New Delhi on 27 May 2014 as well as bilateral discussions held between EAM and the Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister in New Delhi on 11 July 2014. Government remains engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka with a view to ensuring that fishermen on both sides can continue to pursue their livelihood in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.