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Title: Need to release the Tamil fishermen who have been arrested and detained by Sri Lankan police for fishing in the sea-water in the North of Sri Lanka.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Thank you, Speaker, Sir. It is the third time I have been called. Sir, both the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and I was dismayed and distressed to learn that on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2003 that 23 boats with 76 fishermen from Rameswaram base were attacked by the Sri Lankan police. The Sri Lankan fishermen attacked Tamil Nadu fisherman on the high sea, and later they were detained by the Sri Lankan Police.

Sir, about 58 fishermen are in the Mannar Police Station, and remaining 18 fishermen who sustained injuries in the attack by the Sri Lankan fishermen have been admitted in hospitals in Sri Lanka. We all know that the Sri Lanka Government had lifted the ban on fishing by the Sri Lankan fishermen in the Northern Sri Lanka Water.

Sir, the Sri Lankan fishermen have been taking the law to their own hand and attacking the Tamil Nadu fishermen. Fishing is the livelihood of the Tamil Nadu fishermen.

Sir, on receipt of this disturbing reports, on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, particularly, Dr. Jaya Lalitha took up the matter with the Government of India and also with the Indian High Commission at Colombo to take up the matter with the Sri Lankan Government. Sir, she has written a letter also to the Prime Minister yesterday to intervene in the matter, and to see that all the fishermen, arrested, detained by the Srilankan police are released immediately.

It is high time that the Sri Lankan Government should heed to the request of the Tamil Nadu Government. In this regard, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner has not responded to till date.

So, she has requested the Ministry of External affairs, Government of India, to take up the issue with the Sri Lankan Government.

Sir, on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, especially fishermen, and through the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, I appeal to the Government - though she has written a letter yesterday to the Government of India to ask the Sri Lanka Government to release them immediately, to create a conducive atmosphere - to release these fishermen immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Vijayan, I have received Zero Hour notices on this. I along with other Members permit you during 'Zero Hour'

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You can associate with him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Only one sentence, only one sentence.

SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN (NAGAPATTINAM): Sir, more than 42 fishermen from Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu were kidnapped. A large number of fishermen from Nagapattinam district are also arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy. More than 100 fishermen have been arrested and detained by the Sri Lankan Navy. The detention of fishermen and seizure of vessels had created tension in the coastal area.

We, the DMK Members are having a strong feeling in that regard. Therefore, I request the Government of India to take appropriate action for permanent solution in this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Your name will also be associated.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (MAYILADUTURAI): Fishermen from Nagapattinam district have also been arrested in very large numbers by the Sri Lankan Authorities.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Aiyar's name will also be associated with it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN : Sir, I request the Government to take necessary action to find a permanent solution to this issue.

Thank you. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Sir, give him a chance. ...(Interruptions)

He claims to be the fittest person. I say, all hon. Members are the fittest persons. So, please do not speak like that. We are all equals. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. MALAISAMY (RAMANATHAPURAM): Sir, I will just take one minute and finish off. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Your name would also be associated with this. We have to take up the Question Hour. I am going to permit you in the 'Zero Hour'. You will be the first person to speak.

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