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Title: Need to retrieve the Katchatheevu Island from Sri Lanka.

SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN (DHARMAPURI): Mr. Chairman Sir, I would like to raise an urgent matter of public importance regarding Katchatheevu.

Katchatheevu was under the control of India till 1974. This Island has been given to Sri Lanka in 1974 without the approval of both the Houses of Parliament. When the Union Government had taken a decision to give away Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka, the then DMK Government had strongly opposed that move. Our Party had staged a walk-out from the Parliament on this issue.

On the insistence of the then DMK regime, the provisions which were aimed at protecting the traditional fishing rights of the Tamil fishermen, were included. But at a later stage, this clause protecting the Tamil fishermen was deleted despite strong protest by the DMK.

18.00 hrs

It is because of this unilateral decision, Tamil fishermen have been affected since 1974. The unarmed and innocent Tamil fishermen are being mercilessly attacked by Sri Lankan Navy. They are being shot and killed. Their fishing boats and nets are sunk into the sea. Their catch of fish is seized.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put forth your demand.

SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN: They are being treated by the Sri Lankan Navy in an inhuman manner whenever they go near this area. They are arrested and jailed.

The DMK has been demanding to retrieve Katchatheevu and to bring it under the control of the Government of India. The DMK has also been demanding to establish an Indian Navy unit at Dhanushkodi or Mandapam to put an end to this atrocity at the hands of the Sri Lankan Navy, as protecting the rights of Tamil fishermen is the paramount duty of our country.

In this regard, a historical Resolution was passed in the just concluded Eelam Tamils Rights Protection Conference organised by the Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation (TESO) which was headed by our beloved leader Dr. Kalaignar on 12th of this month.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India to take necessary and immediate steps to retrieve Katchatheevu from Sri Lanka, bring it under the control of the Government of India and set up an Indian Navy unit either at Dhanushkodi or Mandapam forthwith and save our citizens.

सभापति महोदय: अगर सबकी सहमति हो तो हाउस का टाइम शून्य काल की समाप्ति तक बढ़ाया जाए।

कई माननीय सदस्य : जी हाँ।

सभापति महोदय : धन्यवाद।