

>

Title: Alleged harassment meted out to fishermen of Tamil Nadu by Sri Lankan Navy.

SHRI K. SHIVKUMAR *ALIAS* J.K. RITHEESH (RAMANATHAPURAM): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the issue of fishermen.

Sir, in Tamil Nadu, almost everyday 'attack on fishermen' forms the headline news in all newspapers and TV channels. This is not the first or second incident. It has been happening since 1983. My party's leader, Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi, had written several letters to our hon. Prime Minister and also hon. Minister for External Affairs. The former Members of Parliament of my constituency had also represented several times in this august House regarding this issue. After I became Member of Parliament, I have also represented several times in this august House regarding this issue, but till now there is no remedy at all.

Sir, whenever our fishermen go for fishing, the Sri Lankan Navy personnel are beating them brutally, breaking their boats, tearing their nets, taking away the fish caught by them, torturing and harassing them against the natural principles of law.

On November 28, 2011, five fishermen were arrested by Sri Lankan Navy and the Sri Lankan Government charged them for the offence of drug smuggling. They are the fishermen and they do not know anything except fishing. Why has the Sri Lankan Government filed such cases against our fishermen? What is the inner motive behind that? On November 10, 2012, violence erupted in the Sri Lanka's biggest prison, where our arrested fishermen are also kept, and 27 prisoners were killed. It was the good luck of our fishermen that they are safe. Had anything happened to our fishermen, who would have been held responsible?

The families and relatives of the affected fishermen came to my residence and asked for the remedial action taken by the Government. I could not answer their question. It may be a small issue to our Government, but it is a very big issue to my constituency.

The Sri Lankan Government did not get any evidence against them for the alleged crime. So, recently the relatives of those fishermen went to meet them in jail at Colombo. The arrested fishermen told them that the Sri Lankan Government was threatening them to accept the crime and saying to the prisoners 'only if you accept the crime, we will release you. Otherwise, we will never release you.'

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Do not go into details and be brief.

SHRI K. SHIVKUMAR *ALIAS* J.K. RITHEESH : Sir, I shall finish in one minute.

The Sri Lankan Government is threatening them that otherwise they would never release those fishermen. The Sri Lankan Government is torturing them like this. So, I would now urge upon the Government to take action to get those five fishermen released on a war-footing basis.