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Title: Need to take necessary steps to free Indian fishermen languishing in jails in Iran.

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise an important matter of public importance regarding the arrest of Indian fishermen in Iran. On 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2012, the Iranian Coast Guard arrested a group of fishermen out of which 30 were from Tamil Nadu. These fishermen were working in Saudi Arabian companies involved in fishing activities. On 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, a group of 14 fishermen and three launches were arrested by the Iranian Coast Guard for the reason that they have crossed into the border of Iran. Thereafter, on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, another group of fishermen were arrested for the same reason and they were also engaged in fishing in four launches. They hail from my constituency Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari, Tuticorin and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu and also from Kerala.

Now both the groups of fishermen are detained in Iran and only on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, the fishermen could inform their relatives that they have been arrested in Iran. After 11 days, the fishermen were told that their fine is paid by the sponsors and they would be released. Once they were released also, they remained in their launches for repatriation. But, on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, these fishermen were again sent to jail and till now they are languishing in Iran jail and they are suffering very much there. In the case of fishermen from Dubai, within three days the Dubai Government paid the fine and retrieved their boats and fishermen, but the Indian fishermen are not so lucky. Now they have spent more than 115 days in captivity of which 22 days were spent in horrible condition. Among them, four people belong to my constituency Tirunelveli. They are, Shri J. Anijoy from Kootapuli, Shri J. Vini of Kootapuli, Shri S. Beni of Kootapuli and Shri S. Amalraj of Mullurthurai.

Sir, their families are in deep distress and sorrow. They are from my constituency and are now suffering in Iran jail. They went to Saudi Arabia to work there and they were working as fishermen there. They have to be released immediately. So, I humbly urge upon the Union Government to kindly take necessary steps for early release of all the Indian fishermen who are held in captivity by the Iranian Coast Guard and languishing in their jail.