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Title: Need to protect the fishing rights of Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay and ensure their safety and security.

DR. K. GOPAL (NAGAPATTINAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to narrate the difficulties and troubles of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu.

The attack of Sri Lankan Navy on the Indian fishermen belonging to the State of Tamil Nadu has become the daily news nowadays. Despite various efforts to bring this menace to an end, it still continues as a nightmare putting a question mark on the livelihood of fishermen. This endless misery creates an attitude of destituteness in the minds of Indian fishermen.

Yesterday 40 fishermen along with their five boats belonging to Akkaraipettai village in my constituency of Nagapattinam had been attacked and abducted by the Sri Lankan Navy. In addition to this, 20 fishermen with two boats have also been abducted by them.

Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma on many occasions brought this matter to the notice of the Government and on 3<sup>rd</sup> June this year she requested in person that the Government should protect the traditional fishing rights of Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay and ensure their safety and security which remains a serious issue because of aggressive posture taken by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Sir, therefore, I would also like to request the Government to take steps to get those fishermen released along with their boats immediately and save their livelihood. I would once again urge upon the Government to take effective steps to bring an end to such aggressive acts by Sri Lanka and ensure the safety of Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay in future.