



Ministry of External Affairs

Government of India

[Home](#) › [Media Center](#) › [Parliament Q & A](#) › [Rajya Sabha](#)

Q. NO.142 ATTACK/DETENTION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

July 17, 2014

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.142
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.07.2014

ATTACK/DETENTION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

*142. SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the attack and detention of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy forces has become a regular feature for the last few months;
- (b) if so, the number of such incidents taken place during the last two years and the number of fishermen detained and released after Government's intervention; and
- (c) whether Government is taking any steps to find a permanent solution to the problem; and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 142 REGARDING "ATTACK/DETENTION OF INDIAN FISHERMEN BY SRI LANKAN NAVY" FOR ANSWER ON 17.07.2014

(a) & (b) Reports have appeared from time to time on incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen allegedly by the Sri Lankan Navy. Since January 2012, fourteen incidents of alleged attack on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy have been reported and there have been no incidents of deaths of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters. Government has consistently taken up issues relating to apprehension of and incidents of attacks on our fishermen with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy acts

with restraint and our fishermen are treated in a humane manner. Government, as a result of its continuous efforts, has secured the release of all 197 apprehended Indian fishermen in 2012, 676 apprehended Indian fishermen in 2013 and 532 apprehended Indian fishermen till 12 July 2014 from the custody of Sri Lanka. As on 12 July 2014, there are 4 Indian fishermen alongwith 47 Indian fishing vessels under the custody of Sri Lankan authorities on charges of fishery related violations.

(c) Government attaches the highest importance to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. An India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) to deal with issues relating to straying fishermen, work out modalities for prevention of use of force against them, the early release of confiscated boats and to explore possibilities of working towards a bilateral agreement has been established since 2004. Further, keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of the fishermen's issue, Government had reached an understanding through a Joint Statement with the Sri Lankan Government on 26 October 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with bonafide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. As part of these arrangements, it was agreed that there would be no firing on Indian fishing vessels and that Indian fishing vessels would not tread into sensitive areas designated by the Government of Sri Lanka along its coastline. Additionally, in 2014, two rounds of India-Sri Lanka Fishermen's Associations talks have taken place in Chennai (27 January 2014) and Colombo (12 May 2014) towards resolution of the issue. The matter was discussed recently during the bilateral meeting of PM with Sri Lankan President on 27 May 2014 in New Delhi. Both leaders called for a permanent solution to the issue. On 11 July 2014, EAM held discussions, including on the fishermen related issue, with the visiting Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister in New Delhi. Government continues to remain engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that fishermen on both sides can continue to pursue their livelihood in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.



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