



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

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Q.NO. 373. FISHERMEN ISSUE WITH SRI LANKA

July 23, 2015

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.373
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2015

FISHERMEN ISSUE WITH SRI LANKA

373. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has impressed upon the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint and not to fire on Indian fishermen and to treat our fishermen in a humane manner, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether during India-Sri Lanka bilateral meetings, including those at the highest level, India has reiterated its position that the use of force could not be justified under any circumstances and that all fishermen should be treated in a humane manner, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has emphasized upon the need for the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint, extend humane treatment to Indian fishermen and not to resort to violence under any circumstances. There are several bilateral mechanisms in place to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and Sri Lanka in resolving the fishermen issue, including the October 2008 Understanding under which it was decided that there will be no firing on Indian fishermen and vessels and that Indian fishing vessels will not tread into sensitive areas designated by the Government of Sri Lanka along its coastline. After the October 2008 Understanding, incidents of apprehension have come down significantly. No cases of deaths of Indian

fishermen in Sri Lankan waters have been reported since April 2011.

The fishermen's issue has been taken up during bilateral meetings, including at the highest levels, as well as during the recent visits of Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister to Sri Lanka. Government has pointed out that the issue of fishermen is a complex one involving livelihood and humanitarian concerns on both sides and that India and Sri Lanka need to find a long term solution. Government has also reiterated the need to treat Indian fishermen humanely and not to resort to violence under any circumstances. Government remains engaged with 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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