



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

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QUESTION NO.3859 FISHERMAN SHOT DEAD BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

April 06, 2017

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3859
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.04.2017

FISHERMAN SHOT DEAD BY SRI LANKAN NAVY

3859. SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian fishermen were shot dead by Sri Lankan navy on 7th March, 2017 near Katchatheevu;
- (b) if so, the detail thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken up this issue with Government of Sri Lanka; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to prevent such incidents?

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

(a) to (d) According to reports received by us, a fishing vessel from Tamil Nadu was fired upon by the Sri Lankan Navy in Palk Bay at around 2230 hrs on 6 March 2017, leading to the death of an Indian fisherman. Another fisherman sustained injury in this incident.

The Government, through diplomatic channels, took up the matter urgently with the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest level and expressed our strong concern over the incident. The Sri Lankan side has, however, denied the involvement of their Navy in the firing incident. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, in a statement, conveyed their deep concern over the alleged firing and loss of life, reiterating the commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that all Government agencies treat Indian

fishermen in a humane manner at all times. The Sri Lankan Government has further reassured us that all possible action will be taken in cooperation with the relevant Indian authorities to investigate the incident. President of Sri Lanka also conveyed to our Vice President in their meeting in Jakarta on 7th March, 2017 on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Leaders' Summit, his regret at the unfortunate incident and the loss of life. He emphasized that he has ordered a full investigation.

Government regularly takes up with the Government of Sri Lanka the issues related to the well being, safety and security of Indian fishermen. India has consistently maintained that the fishermen issues involve longstanding livelihood and socio-economic practices and humanitarian concerns that need to be handled with great care and sensitivity. We have strongly conveyed to Sri Lanka that the use of force cannot be justified under any circumstances.

With Sri Lanka, a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries has been set up as a bilateral institutional mechanism to help find a permanent solution to all fishermen issues. It has also been agreed that Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries meet every six months to review the progress. The first meeting of the JWG on Fisheries was held in New Delhi on 31 December 2016 and the first ministerial meeting was held on 2 January 2017 in Colombo. The JWG agreed to a set of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) which included "an understanding to ensure that there was no physical harm or loss of life while apprehending fishermen by Navy and Coast Guard of the two countries."



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