

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-958**  
**ANSWERED ON-17.07.2014**  
Fishermen in jails of Pakistan

958 . Shri Parimal Nathwani

- (a) the details and number of fishermen of India who are still in jails of Pakistan, Sri Lanka;
- (b) the details of their crime, innocence or the trials in foreign countries;
- (c) whether there are any guidelines and/or procedure to take actions for early release of the innocent fishermen with their respective boats and equipment, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether there is any provision or the precedent for giving compensation to the family of those fishermen whose custody is prolonged without trial or those who die in jail in foreign country, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (d) Presently, 249 fishermen believed to be Indian continue to remain lodged in jails in Pakistan (as on 1 July 2014), while 4 Indian fishermen are in the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities (as on 12 July 2014). The Indian fishermen were arrested after inadvertently crossing the perceived International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the case of Pakistan and International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the case of Sri Lanka. Government regularly takes up with the Pakistan authorities the issue of the early release and repatriation of all such prisoners and their boats as well as providing regular consular access to them. Government of India also, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of all such Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails. The India-Pakistan Judicial Committee consisting of retired judges from both countries visits jails in both countries to ensure humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners, including fishermen, who have completed their prison term. In respect of Sri Lanka, in 2004 an India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) was established which has been dealing with all issues related to straying Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters, including working out the modalities for prevention of use of force against them and securing early release of their confiscated boats.

Ministry of Agriculture is the designated nodal agency for payment of compensation to fishermen lodged in Pakistani jails. Additionally a Soft Loan Package for replacement of fishing vessels held in captivity in Pakistan is implemented by the Marine Exports Development Authority (MPEDA).

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