

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-32**  
**ANSWERED ON-02.02.2017**

Fishermen apprehended by navy of Sri Lanka and Pakistan

32 . Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad

Smt. Chhaya Verma

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that reports of Sri Lankan Navy repeatedly apprehending Indian fishermen fishing in Indian waters keep on surfacing and such incidents have happened in last January too;
- (b) if so, the number of Indian fishermen apprehended and imprisoned by Sri Lankan and Pakistani Navy, as on date; and
- (c) the steps being taken to get such Indian fishermen released who are lodged in Sri Lankan and Pakistani prisons and the number of fishermen who got released during the last two years?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) Instances of Indian fishermen apprehended for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters have been reported from time to time.
- (b) The number of Indian fishermen apprehended and in custody in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as on date, is as under:
  - (i) Sri Lanka - 20
  - (ii) Pakistan - 147
- (c) Government regularly takes up with the Governments of Sri Lanka and Pakistan the matter of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen and fishing boats. Our High Commissions in Colombo and Islamabad provide humanitarian and legal assistance to the apprehended 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.

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 number of Indian fishermen released during the last two years is as under:

(i) Sri Lanka - 708

(ii) Pakistan - 858