

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO-233**  
**ANSWERED ON-23.03.2017**

Fishermen apprehended by Sri Lanka and Pakistan

233 . Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether reports of arrest of Indian fishermen fishing in Indian waters by the Sri Lankan Navy are repeatedly coming to light and such incidents have been reported even during the last February and March;
- (b) the number of Indian fishermen apprehended and kept in custody by the Sri Lankan and Pakistani Navy during January and February, 2017; and
- (c) the details of steps being taken to get such fishermen released and the number of such fishermen actually released during the last two years?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ]

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

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 233 REGARDING “FISHERMEN APPREHENDED BY SRI LANKA AND PAKISTAN” FOR ANSWER ON 23.03.2017.

- (a) Instances of Indian fishermen apprehended for allegedly fishing in Sri Lankan waters have been reported from time to time, including during the last two months.
- (b) As per available information, the number of Indian fishermen apprehended and in custody in Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the months of January-February 2017 is as under:
  - (i) Sri Lanka - 35
  - (ii) Pakistan - 65

(c) Government regularly takes up with the Governments of Sri Lanka and Pakistan the matter of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen. 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 related 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

In addition, the number of Indian fishermen released in 2017 by Pakistan and Sri Lanka as of 20 March 2017 is 218 and 136 respectively.