

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-659
ANSWERED ON-21.12.2017

Indian boats and fishermen captured by Pakistan

659 . Shri Vinay Dinu Tendulkar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether 801 Indian fishing boats captured by Pakistan in the past are now untraceable and there is no hope for bringing them back;
- (b) whether Government has taken up with Pakistan Government any new initiative to trace the above boats;
- (c) whether on March 5th, 2015 the Pakistan authorities had captured 46 Indian fishermen; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by Government to get them released from Pakistan's captivity?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) As per available information, there are around 1000 Indian Fishing Boats (IFBs) in Pakistan's custody. However, Pakistan does not acknowledge the number of IFBs in their custody.

Government regularly takes up the issue of release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with their boats with the Pakistan authorities. Due to persistent efforts of the Government, 57 boats were released and repatriated in March 2015. Subsequently, visit of a team including fishermen representatives, was organised to Karachi in March 2016 to assess the condition of 22 other IFBs in Pakistan's custody. However, there has been no response from Pakistan Government with regard to visit of a follow up delegation for repatriation of these boats.

(c) & (d) As per available reports, around 40 Indian fishermen were apprehended by Pakistan authorities in the intervening night of 5 and 6 March 2015. Upon receiving the information about the apprehension, Government through diplomatic channels, raised the issue of consular access and their early release and repatriation with Pakistan Government. With sustained diplomatic efforts, Government has secured release of 1211 Indian fishermen, including those apprehended on 5 March 2015, from Pakistan since 2015.