

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2255
ANSWERED ON-15.03.2018

Identity verification for release of Indians from Pakistani jails

2255 Sardar Balwinder Singh Bhunder

- (a) whether it is a fact that more than 50 Indian civilians are languishing in Pakistani Jails even after serving their jail terms ranging from 5-15 years;
- (b) if so, details in this regard;
- (c) whether many Indians serving sentences in various Pakistani prisons have not been released because their identity verification has not been provided by the Indian Embassy; and
- (d) if so, what steps Government is contemplating in this regard for the early release of such Indian prisoners?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) As per the lists exchanged between the Governments of India and Pakistan on 1 January 2018, Pakistan has acknowledged custody of 58 civilian prisoners who are believed-to-be Indian nationals. Of these, Pakistan has provided consular access to 47 prisoners, so far. Nationality of 7 of these prisoners has been confirmed. One of them has completed his sentence and his release and repatriation has been consistently taken up with Pakistan authorities. The cases of 13 civilian prisoners are at different stages of nationality verification process.

Nationality of 27 civilian prisoners, who are mentally unsound, could not be confirmed in absence of adequate information. In this regard, Government took the initiative to propose a visit of a team of medical experts to assess the mental health of these prisoners with a view to facilitate their nationality verification and subsequent repatriation. The Government of Pakistan on 7 March 2018, agreed to our proposal. The visa applications for Indian medical experts have been submitted with the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

Government continues to pursue the case of consular access to the remaining civilian prisoners and seek early release and repatriation of all Indian nationals languishing in Pakistan's custody.

It may be noted that as a result of persistent efforts, Government has been able to secure the release and repatriation of 19 Indian civilian prisoners from Pakistan since 2014, so far.

