

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O Letter dated 26.11.2015 addressed by  
**Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to  
**Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India:

"This is to bring to your notice, yet another incident of apprehension of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy in their traditional fishing waters of the Palk Bay. The attacks on and apprehension of our fishermen continue unabated, creating a sense of fear and unrest among the fisherfolk in Tamil Nadu.

It has been reported that 11 fishermen in 2 mechanised fishing boats, who set out for fishing from Rameswaram fishing base in Ramanathapuram District, have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 25.11.2015, and taken to Thalaimannar, Sri Lanka. In yet another incident, 4 fishermen in a mechanised fishing boat who set out for fishing from Kottaipattinam fishing base in Pudukottai District have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of 26.11.2015 and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

These poor fishermen were peacefully following their avocation of fishing which is the only means of livelihood known to them. They were fishing in the Palk Bay which historically is their traditional fishing waters. The issue of the International Maritime Boundary Line is sub judice in the Supreme Court of India, wherein the validity of the Indo-Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976 ceding the islet of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka has been challenged by me on very valid grounds to which the Government of Tamil Nadu has also impleaded itself as a party.

As I have mentioned to you many times in the past, 50 boats continue to be in Sri Lankan custody for many months now. Our fishermen are extremely concerned that their fishing boats, their sole livelihood source, would become unsalvageable after the onslaught of the North East monsoon which has been particularly heavy this year. It is highly disheartening that the only means of livelihood of several fishermen has been left without care and exposed to adverse weather conditions along the coast of Sri Lanka. Hence it is imperative that the issue of the release of these boats is taken up with the highest levels of the Sri Lankan administration and the immediate release of these boats is ensured.

I request you to immediately direct the concerned officials in the ministry of External Affairs to take immediate action through diplomatic channels to secure the release of 29 fishermen and 53 fishing boats including the 15 fishermen and their 3 fishing boats apprehended on 26.11.2015. In addition the 4 fishermen in a motorized fishing boat who drifted on 8.11.2015, to the Sri Lankan shores due to mechanical failure continue to be stranded in Sri Lanka. Their early return also needs to be secured.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.  
Dated: 26.11.2015