

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.552
TO BE ANSWERED ON **20.11.2019**

ATTACK ON INDIAN FISHERMEN

552. DR. T. SUMATHY (a) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy still exists in the last five years in spite of several measures taken by both Indian and Sri Lankan Governments;
- (b) if so, the details of such cases reported during each of the last three years till date and the number of Indian fishermen injured, captured or killed in such incidents;
- (c) whether the Government is providing satellite phones to fishermen as a safety measure and to track them during the encounters with Sri Lankan Navy;
- (d) if not, the reasons for not providing satellite phones to fishermen as a safety measure; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government for safety and security of the fishermen against such attacks?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) & (b) During the last three years, there have been some reports of attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy. These incidents were immediately taken up with Sri Lankan authorities. The details of such cases are placed below:

Sl. No.	Year	No. of alleged incidents of assault/attack reported	No. of fishermen allegedly/ reportedly killed	No. of fishermen arrested in these incidents	No. of fishermen allegedly injured
1	2016	02	Nil	05	03
2	2017	02	01	10	02
3	2018	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
4	2019 (till 14 Nov)	05	00	44	14

(c) & (d) As per the available information, Government of Tamil Nadu has provided 160 satellite phones to deep sea going fishermen of Tamil Nadu. With the assistance of Government of India, 507 transponders have also been installed by the

Government of Tamil Nadu in mechanised fishing boats on pilot basis under a scheme for Diversification of Trawl Fishing into Long Lining from Palk Bay into Deep Sea Fishing.

Under the Scheme on 'Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries' of Government of India, assistance is provided to fishermen for obtaining safety kits which consist of GPS, communication equipment, echo-sounder, lifejackets, lifebuoys, Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT), life-saving appliances (VHF radiotelephones), fish finder, backup battery, search and rescue beacon etc.

(e) Government of India attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Government has taken up the fishermen issues at the highest level, including by the Prime Minister in his meetings with his Sri Lankan counterparts. Sri Lankan Government has been requested to treat the fishermen issue as a purely humanitarian and livelihood concern, and it has been stressed that both sides should ensure that there is no use of force under any circumstances. Following sustained diplomatic efforts, since May 2014 till date, Government has secured the release of 2079 Indian fishermen. Currently, 04 Indian fishermen are in Sri Lankan custody. Efforts are ongoing to secure their release.

Following the 2+2 initiative in November 2016 when the Foreign and Fisheries Ministers of the two countries met in New Delhi, a bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) mechanism and meeting of the Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries was institutionalized to address the fishermen issues with Sri Lanka. So far 3 rounds of the JWG meeting and 2 rounds of the Ministerial meeting have been held. Government is constantly in touch with the Sri Lankan side to schedule the fourth round of JWG and the third round of Ministerial meeting.
