

Fishermen apprehended/imprisoned and attacked by Sri Lankan forces

2570. SHRI K.R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian fishermen apprehended/imprisoned/attacked and their equipments and fishing boats seized by security forces of Sri Lanka during the last three years;

(b) the time since when they have been imprisoned and the action taken to get them released along with fishing boats/tractors/equipments and the success achieved in this regard; and

(c) whether any meeting has been fixed with the authorities of Sri Lanka for amicable settlement of the issues, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: (a)

Year	Number of fishermen apprehended	Number of boats seized
2014	787	164
2015	454	71
2016	254	46

(b) As soon as reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities are received, Government, through diplomatic channels, takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka to secure the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen along with their vessels. India has consistently maintained that the fishermen issues involve longstanding livelihood and socio-economic practices and humanitarian concerns on both sides. It has been conveyed to the Sri Lankan side at the highest levels that the issue needs to be handled with great care and sensitivity.

Year	Number of fishermen released	Number of boats released
2014	1045 (including 273 of 2013 & 772 of 2014)	159 (85 of 2013, 74 of 2014)
2015	375 (including 15 of 2014 & 360 of 2015)	88 (87 of 2014, 1 drifted boat of 2015)
2016	333 (including 94 of 2015 & 239 of 2016)	—

(c) The India-Sri Lanka Ministerial level meeting on fishermen issues held in New Delhi on 5 November 2016 agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries, between Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka, as a bilateral institutional mechanism to help find a permanent solution to all fishermen issues. It has also been agreed that Ministers for Fisheries of the two countries would meet every six months to review the progress. The first ministerial meeting is scheduled for 2 January 2017 in Colombo.

Pakistan providing safe haven to terrorists

2571. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the UK Government's failure to condemn Pakistan for providing safe haven for terrorists is disappointing;

(b) whether as a long standing strategically the UK Government should be standing shoulder to shoulder with India;

(c) whether soft peddling by the UK is letting down the victims of terror; and

(d) if so, whether Government raised this issue during the visit of Prime Minister of UK to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: (a) to (d) India and the UK share a comprehensive strategic partnership. UK has repeatedly reiterated its strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. During the recent visit of UK PM Theresa May to India in November 2016, the two Prime Ministers agreed to further enhance security cooperation including counter terrorism. This was reflected in the Joint Statement issued during the visit. The two leaders reiterated their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stressed that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever - agreeing that there should be zero tolerance on terrorism. They affirmed that the fight against terrorism should not only seek to disrupt and bring to justice terrorists, terror organisations and networks, but should also identify, hold accountable and take strong measures against all those who encourage, support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups, and falsely extol their virtues. They agreed that there should be no glorification of terrorists or efforts to make a distinction between good and bad terrorists. UK reiterated its call for Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and 2016 Pathankot attack to justice. PM May strongly condemned the terror attack in Uri and affirmed that UK stands shoulder to shoulder with India in defeating terrorism.