

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.109
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.02.2021.

COLLISION OF INDIAN FISHING BOAT WITH SRI LANKAN NAVAL CRAFT

***109 . SHRI VAIKO:**

Will the Minister of **External Affairs** be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of fishermen who died in Sri Lankan waters recently due to collision between their vessel and Sri Lankan Naval craft;
- (b) the response of the Indian Government, including any strong protest, condemnation lodged with the Sri Lankan authorities;
- (c) whether any compensation or damage has been sought from Sri Lanka due to their deliberate act, resulting in death of fishermen;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken to ensure that such incidents does not happen in future, including arrest and harassment of Indian fishermen by Sri Lanka, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

- (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE
RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 109 REGARDING “COLLISION
OF INDIAN FISHING BOAT WITH SRI LANKAN NAVAL CRAFT” FOR
ANSWER ON 11.02.2021.**

According to available information, on January 18, 2021, four fishermen lost their lives following a collision between their vessel and a Sri Lankan naval craft.

A strong protest in regard to this incident was conveyed by our High Commissioner to the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister. A strong demarche was also made to the Sri Lankan Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi.

Expressing Government's deep anguish at the loss of lives, we emphasized the need to deal with issues pertaining to fishermen in a humane manner. It was stressed that existing understandings between the two Governments in that regard must be strictly observed and utmost efforts should be made to ensure that there is no recurrence.

The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety and security of Indian Fishermen. As soon as reports of apprehension of Indian fishermen are received, the Government through diplomatic channels takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Issues relating to Indian fishermen have been raised at the highest level, including by our Prime Minister with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit held in September 2020. During my visit to Colombo from 5-7 January 2021, I met the Minister of Fisheries of Sri Lanka and discussed all issues related to Indian fishermen.

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 fishermen issues with Sri Lanka. On December 30, 2020, the 4th Round of the Joint Working Group (JWG) was concluded between the two governments where the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen were discussed.

भारत सरकार
विदेश मंत्रालय

राज्य सभा

तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या *109

दिनांक 11.02.2021 को उत्तर देने के लिए

मछली पकड़ने वाली भारतीय नौका का श्रीलंका की नौसेना के जहाज से टकराना

***109. श्री वाङ्को:**

क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

- (क) हाल ही में श्रीलंका के समुद्री क्षेत्र में भारतीय मछुआरों की नौका और श्रीलंका की नौसेना के जहाज में टक्कर हो जाने से कितने मछुआरों की मौत हुई है;
- (ख) इस संबंध में भारत सरकार द्वारा कड़ा विरोध जताए जाने तथा श्रीलंका के प्राधिकारियों के समक्ष दण्डादेश दर्ज कराए जाने सहित क्या कार्यवाही की गई है;
- (ग) क्या श्रीलंका द्वारा जानबूझ कर किए गए इस कृत्य, जिसके कारण मछुआरों की मौत हो गई है, के लिए उससे किसी क्षतिपूर्ति अथवा भरपाई की मांग की गई है;
- (घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और
- (ङ) यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए क्या-क्या उपाय किए गए हैं कि भविष्य में श्रीलंका द्वारा भारतीय मछुआरों की गिरफ्तारी तथा उत्पीड़न किए जाने जैसी घटनाएं न हो पाएं, तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

उत्तर

विदेश मंत्री

(डॉ. सुब्रह्मण्यम जयशंकर)

- (क) से (ङ) विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

दिनांक **11.02.2021** को उत्तर दिए जाने के लिए "मछली पकड़ने वाली भारतीय नौका का श्रीलंका की नौसेना के जहाज से टकराना" के संबंध में राज्य सभा तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या *109 के भाग (क) से (ड) के उत्तर में उल्लिखित विवरण

उपलब्ध जानकारी के अनुसार 18 जनवरी, 2021 को मछुआरों की नाव और श्रीलंकाई नौसेना के एक जलयान के आपस में टकराने के कारण चार मछुआरों की मृत्यु हो गई।

इस घटना के संबंध में हमारे उच्चायुक्त ने श्रीलंका के विदेश मंत्री के समक्ष कड़ा विरोध दर्ज करवाया था। नई दिल्ली स्थित श्रीलंका के कार्यवाहक उच्चायुक्त के समक्ष भी सख्त राजनयिक विरोध दर्ज करवाया गया।

मछुआरों की मृत्यु पर गहरी पीड़ा व्यक्त करते हुए, हमने संबंधित मुद्दों को मानवीय ढंग से निपटाने की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया। इस बात पर बल दिया गया कि इस संबंध में दोनों सरकारों के बीच मौजूदा समझौतों का सख्ती से पालन किया जाए और इस प्रकार की घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति न हो, यह सुनिश्चित करने के सभी संभव प्रयास किए जाएं।

सरकार भारतीय मछुआरों की सुरक्षा और हिफाजत को सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता देती है। जैसे ही किसी भारतीय मछुआरों के गिरफ्तार होने की रिपोर्ट मिलती है, सरकार राजनयिक माध्यमों से श्रीलंका की सरकार के साथ उस मुद्दे को उठाती है।

भारतीय मछुआरों से संबंधित मुद्दों को उच्चतम स्तरों पर उठाया जाता है, इस बारे में सितंबर, 2020 में आयोजित वर्चुअल द्विपक्षीय शिखर सम्मेलन के दौरान हमारे प्रधान मंत्री ने श्रीलंकाई प्रधान मंत्री के साथ बातचीत की थी। 5-7 जनवरी, 2021 की मेरी कोलम्बो यात्रा के दौरान, मैं श्रीलंका के मात्स्यिकी मंत्री से मिला और उनके साथ भारतीय मछुआरों से संबंधित सभी मुद्दों पर विचार-विमर्श किया।

नवंबर 2016 में 2 +2 पहल के बाद, जब दोनों देशों के विदेश और मात्स्यिकी मंत्रियों ने नई दिल्ली में मुलाकात की थी तब श्रीलंका के साथ मछुआरों के मसलों का समाधान करने के लिए एक द्विपक्षीय संयुक्त कार्य समूह (जेडब्ल्यूजी) तंत्र तथा दोनों देशों के मात्स्यिकी मंत्रियों की बैठक को संस्थागत रूप दिया गया था। 30 दिसंबर, 2020 को दोनों सरकारों के

बीच जेडब्ल्यूजी के चौथे दौर की बैठक का आयोजन किया गया था, जिसमें मछुआरों से संबंधित सभी मुद्दों पर चर्चा की गई थी।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any supplementaries?

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for taking a lot of efforts in getting released the Tamil Nadu fishermen arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy. At the same time, I would like to bring to his kind notice that till now the Sri Lankan Navy has killed 245 Tamil Nadu fishermen, apart from the recent ones. I would, through you, like to request the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister to take necessary action and condemn the Government of Sri Lanka for these atrocities. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question. You can speak in detail during the Budget discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*... What is your question? ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Just one minute, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I am not going to allow for one minute. What is your question?

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Sir, I have just one question. But the matter is also before the Supreme Court. Somebody has gone to Supreme Court. I would like to know as to what sort of action the Government of India is going to take in this matter. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please try to understand my problem. Of course, this is a very important issue. But, this is Question Hour.

DR. S. JAISHANKAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the issue of our fishermen was taken up during my visit to Sri Lanka in early January. It was preceded by a Joint Working Group, set up between our Governments, which met there on 30th December. Unfortunately, on January 18th, we had this incident where four of our fishermen were killed as a result of a collision between their vessel and the Sri Lankan naval craft. We have very, very strongly protested to the Sri Lankans on this matter. In response to that, they have instituted an inquiry. We are awaiting the results of the inquiry. But, I wish to assure the hon. Member, through you, Sir, that we will take a very strong view on this matter. We want to hold the Sri Lankans to their commitment not to use force under any circumstances on this issue.

DR. SASMIT PATRA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my specific question arises from the answer given by the hon. Minister. Have there been any specific measures undertaken after the fourth round of the Joint Working Group to reduce the incidents of collision by Indian fishing boats in international waters, as mentioned in the question?

SHRI S. JAISHANKAR: Sir, right now, our Coast Guards are in touch, both through the diplomatic channels and through other mechanisms. We have procedures by

which we will try and avoid this collision. So, this is something which should be a subject of even greater attention and recommendation.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, collision between the two vessels is the version of the Sri Lankan Navy. This incident is not the first one; it is one of the recurring incidences. The Sri Lankan Navy not only manhandles our fishermen, they also shoot at them. They also seize their boats and keep them exposed in hard Sun and rain. My question is: Has the Government taken initiatives to get back the boats or to get compensation for those boats or the lives that have been lost by way of shooting by the Sri Lankan Navy?

SHRI S. JAISHANKAR: Sir, we give the utmost attention both for the release of fishermen and for the release of boats which are taken into custody by Sri Lanka. Right now, there are no Indian fishermen in the custody of Sri Lanka. There were nine till recently; they have been released. As of now, there are 62 Indian boats which we are trying to get released from Sri Lankan custody. Previously, there were 173 boats, out of which 36 were salvageable. So, the auction procedures for the unsalvageable boats are currently under discussion. Our endeavour would be, whatever can be returned, we will get returned and whatever can be salvaged, we will expedite the salvage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. NO. 110.