

26 February, 2011

Ms. Navanethem Pillay

Office of the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights UNOG-OHCHR

Palais Wilson

52 rue des Pâquis

CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Ms. Navanethem Pillay,

Re: A PLEA TO SAVE LIVES OF TAMILNADU FISHERMEN, INDIA

We are deeply shattered by the news of our Tamil Nadu Fishermen, India are being attacked and killed by Sri Lankan Navy continuously. According to media since 1983, lost 539 fishermen lives and thousands of fishermen severely injured. Local fishermen say actual counts are much higher. Though these attacks happen often in Sri Lankan waters, many attacks also happen in Indian Territory waters. To quote recent such incidents, on **January 12, 2011 fisherman** named **Pandiyan**, aged 19 was shot dead by Sri Lankan Navy. Ten days later on **January 22, 2011**, another fisherman named N.Jayakumar was killed by the Sri Lankan Navy personnel off Vedaranyam coast in Nagapattinam district of TamilNadu, India. Tamil Nadu State fisheries department officials said the Sri Lankan naval personnel tied a rope around the neck of 28-year-old handicapped fisherman N.Jayakumar and dragged him into the sea, strangling him to death.

Our fishermen of TamilNadu shown their protests in various peaceful ways (hunger strikes for many days) and condemned the Indian Governments (both state and central) for not taking necessary actions to stop such merciless killings since first attack on 1983. Our political parties also protested in all parts of our state and country including in our capital city, **New Delhi, India**. Our state government heads, Honorable Chief Minister(s) [present and past], have requested our Honorable Prime Minister(s) [present and past] numerous times in last three decades to make efforts to stop these killings.

Our Indian government officers and Ministers have discussed these issues with Sri Lankan government officers, Ministers and also with Sri Lankan Presidents. Sri Lankan government has promised for no such attacks on Indian fishermen repeatedly. Even both Governments (both Indian and Sri Lanka) made a joint statement that **“there will be no firing on Indian fishing vessels”** dated on **26th October 2008**.

Even then the loud wailing for the dead fishermen and the merciless killings continue at our seashores. This clearly shows the lack of commitment from Sri Lankan government and failure of Indian government in enforcing a policy to stop these merciless killings and inhuman treatments.

They are our family and friends, our own kin.... We appeal to you to act against these inhuman treatments by Sri Lankan Navy and help us to resolve this issue and restore peace among our lives of TamilNadu fishermen. We kindly request help from United Nations Human Rights in the following areas:

1. Mediate the talks between Indian and Sri Lankan governments towards clear actions for stopping these human rights violations
2. Monitor actions of both governments to make sure they act according to the agreed set of actions
3. When either government deviates from agreed terms, pressurize that government to act according to agreed terms

Your quick actions will be greatly appreciated as delays are measured by our fishermen lives not just by days.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration and action.

Sincerely,
Undersigned