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<http://atimes.com/2015/09/indian-fisherman-killed-in-pak-maritime-agency-firing-off-gujarat/>

Indian fisherman killed as Pak Navy fires at two boats off Gujarat coast

9/18/2015

An Indian fisherman was killed off Dwarka in Gujarat when Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) personnel fired about 5 to 6 rounds at two fishing boats.



The dead fisherman riding a boat Premraj was identified as Iqbal Bhatti, 40.

He died of injuries after being hit by a bullet on the right collar bone.

The incident happened about ten nautical miles across the notional International Maritime Boundary Line early Friday.

An association of local fishermen, while condemning the incident, said there was no provocation for the act.

The vessel from which the bullets were fired was comparatively bigger and it was carrying about 40 people, officials quoted the fishermen as saying.

While the Indian Coast Guard did not specify any agency of the neighboring country behind this act, the fishermen's association said the shots were fired by PMSA which patrols the marine boundary line of Pakistan.

"There was no number or name written on the boat and it was carrying blue and green colour flags. There is no indication to pinpoint that the boat belonged to any particular organisation or country," Coast Guard inspector general VSR Murthy told ANI.

Pakistan media, quoting PMSA, said none of its vessels were in the area when the incident happened.

At 9.30 am, Indian Coast Guard ship Vijit intercepted a VHF call seeking its help for an Indian fishing boat being fired upon by an unidentified boat.

The Coast Guard rushed two ships towards the site of the incident. Also, a Dornier aircraft was pressed into service from Porbandar station to undertake aerial surveillance of the area along the IMBL.

The Coast Guard ship Vijit effected rendezvous with the boat and ascertained that the firing incident had resulted in the death of a fisherman.

The remaining crew is safe and the fishing boat was escorted by Indian Coast Guard ship Meera Behn to Okkha.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi's political secretary Ahmed Patel, a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat, termed the incident as "despicable and unprecedented" and attacked the Narendra Modi-led NDA government for "failing to secure the Gujarat coast line".

Patel said he had repeatedly reminded the central government of vulnerability of fishermen from Gujarat but the government did not beef up security for them.

India and Pakistan share a disputed maritime boundary in the waters off the Gujarat coast and the region is patrolled by vessels from both sides.

Dozens of fishermen are arrested in the area every year for allegedly violating the boundary.

However, firing at fishermen is rare.