

# Havana syndrome

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**In news-** Recently US Vice-President Kamala Harris' trip from Singapore to Vietnam was delayed due to Havana syndrome.

## **About the syndrome-**

- Havana syndrome was **first detected in 2016 among spies and diplomats working at the American embassy in Havana.**
- Several US spies and diplomats have been severely affected by the syndrome since then, with some complaining that they even retired from their jobs due to this "illness".
- These "unexplained health ailments" have been reported by Americans serving in other countries, including Germany, Austria, Russia and China.
- A person suffering from Havana syndrome exhibits a **range of symptoms including nausea, hearing loss, memory loss, dizziness and tinnitus.**
- Some of those have also reported hearing a loud piercing sound and feeling intense pressure in the face.
- When the brains of some affected people were scanned, the **diagnosis revealed tissue damage similar to the one caused by a car accident or a bomb blast.**
- The real cause for Havana syndrome has not been ascertained yet.
- In December 2020, a report by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) was published by researchers that revealed **directed and pulsed radio frequency energy as the most "plausible" cause for this syndrome.**
- Some researchers have also considered microwave weapons to be "a main suspect" for the syndrome.

## What is Havana syndrome?

The medical mystery named for the Cuban city where U.S. diplomats first experienced sudden, debilitating symptoms in 2016 has been reported by Americans serving in several other countries.

Acute symptoms (often occurring suddenly) may include:

Loud sounds (sometimes described as chirping, clicking or screeching) and pain in one or both ears; many felt the sensations came from a particular direction or were felt when in a specific location

Tinnitus, hearing loss

Intense pressure or vibration inside the head

Difficulty with memory or concentration

Visual disturbances

Nausea

Unsteady gait, loss of balance, vertigo/dizziness

Chronic symptoms (can last weeks, months or longer) may include:

Headache

Impaired concentration, memory loss

Insomnia

Depression

Impaired balance

No definitive cause has been found, but scientific studies have noted many of the acute symptoms are consistent with exposure to directed radio frequency (RF) energy. One theory posits the use of RF energy by a U.S. adversary as a weapon or a tool of espionage.

