

SPG Amendment Bill, 2019

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: Security forces under Internal Security sections is an important aspect for Mains. Studying the forces which are in news becomes compulsory.

In news: Lok Sabha has passed Special Protection Group (SPG) amendment bill, 2019

Placing it in syllabus: Security forces and agencies

Dimensions:

- What is SPG and who all are covered under it?
- Why Gandhis were given SPG protection?
- Other protection troops for VIP
- SPG amendment bill provisions

Content:

What is SPG and who all are covered under it?

- Based on the **Birbal Nath Committee recommendations** the Special Protection Group (SPG) **came into being in April 1985** in the wake of the killing of PM Indira Gandhi in 1984.
- It was raised with the **intention to provide proximate security cover to the Prime Minister and his family members.**
- For three years , SPG functioned under executive orders.
- An **SPG Act** of the Parliament of India was **enacted in 1988.**
- Then, the Act did not include former prime ministers.
- After Rajiv's assassination in 1991, the SPG Act was amended to offer protection to all former PMs and their

- families for at least 10 years.
- Then the Act was **amended in 1994, 1999 and 2003.**
 - **Cabinet Secretariat of India is its governing body.**
 - SPG adopts innovative methods and **collaborates with the IB and State/ UT police forces** to provide overall security arrangements.
 - **At present, it provides security only to the Prime Minister of India and their immediate family members** residing with them at the official residence.
 - The **former prime ministers and their family members** are given **Z+ security cover.**
 - **The SPG protectees travel in special bullet proof or armoured cars and are entitled to use special choppers or aircraft of the Indian Air Force for transport.**
 - Under the SPG Act, the state governments are bound to meet the security cover demands of the SPG.

Why Gandhis were given SPG protection?

- Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, were given the SPG protection because, **two of their family members, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, both former Prime Ministers of India, were assassinated.**
- On 8th November 2019, Government of India decided to **withdraw SPG Cover** from Gandhi Family and **accorded them with Z+ Security.**
- Now **CRPF is in charge of providing security to Gandhis and former prime minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur** as per Z+ security norms.
- As of now, CRPF is using the vehicles, equipment and technical gadgets that were used by the SPG to provide security to these members.
- **While an SPG protectee is guarded by nearly 100 SPG commandos, the one with Z+ cover is guarded by a team of 55, which includes at least 10 National Security Guard (NSG) commandos.**

Other protection troops for VIP:

- The **Home Ministry takes the decision of level of protection** an individual needs, based on inputs of threat from intelligence agencies.
- Certain individuals, by **dint of their position in government, are automatically entitled** to security cover like the Prime Minister and his immediate family, Home Minister and officials such as the National Security Adviser.

There are largely **six types of security covers: X, Y, Y plus, Z, Z plus and SPG.**

- The **X category** on an average entails just one gunman protecting the individual.
- **Y** has one gunman for mobile security and one (plus four on rotation) for static security.
- **Y plus** has two policemen on rotation for security and one (plus four on rotation) for residence security.
- **Z** has six gunmen for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security.
- **Z plus** has 10 security personnel for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security.

The **various kinds of cover** within these levels include security of residence, mobile security, office security and inter-state security.

National Security Guard (NSG) is a **special commando unit for surgical strikes against organised terrorist attacks** within the country. It has **two groups of personnel and officers:** Special Action Group (SAG) and the Special Ranger Group (SRG). Out of these two, **SRG is used for VIP security.**

SPG bill, 2019 provisions:

- The SPG will **provide security to Prime Minister and members of his immediate family residing with him** at his official residence.
- It will also provide **security to former prime ministers,**

and his immediate family members residing with him at the residence allotted to him **for a period of five years.**

- When the **proximate security is withdrawn from a former Prime Minister,** such proximate security shall **also stand withdrawn from members of his or her immediate family.**