

# Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)

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**In news**—Hours after a group of people chanting pro-Khalistan slogans took down the Indian flag at the High Commission in London, the Indian government has summoned the “senior-most” UK diplomat and reminded basic obligations of the UK Government under the Vienna Convention.

## What is Vienna Convention?

- The term “Vienna Convention” can refer to any of a number of treaties signed in Vienna, most of which are related to the harmonisation or formalisation of the procedures of international diplomacy.
- The treaty being referred to by the MEA in this instance is the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), which provides a complete framework for the establishment, maintenance and termination of diplomatic relations on a basis of consent between independent sovereign States.

## About Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)-

- Most notably, the Convention codifies the longstanding custom of diplomatic immunity, in which diplomatic missions are granted privileges that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by the host country.
- It affirms the concept of “inviolability” of a diplomatic mission, which has been one of the enduring cornerstones of international diplomacy.
- The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations entered into force on April 24, 1964 and is nearly universally ratified, with Palau and South Sudan being the exceptions.

- **As per the Vienna Convention, a “receiving State” refers to the host nation** where a diplomatic mission is located.
- In this case, the host nation is the UK and as per the Vienna Convention, it has some **basic obligations towards the diplomatic missions it hosts on its sovereign territory.**
- Article 22 of the Convention deals with obligations with regards to the premises of the Mission.
- Part 2 of this article states that “The receiving State is under a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity”.
- **Basically, the security of any High Commission or Embassy is the responsibility of the host nation.**
- While diplomatic missions can also employ their own security, ultimately, the host nation is accountable for security.