

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:205
ANSWERED ON:11.03.2015
ILL TREATMENT OF INDIAN DIPLOMATS
Anwar Shri Tariq

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of incidents of ill-treatment meted out to Indian diplomats in various countries have come to the notice of the Government and if so, the details of such cases reported during the last three years and the current year, country-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has raised these issues with the respective countries or at International fora and if so, the details thereof and the response thereto, country-wise; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 205 REGARDING "ILL-TREATMENT OF INDIAN DIPLOMATS" FOR ANSWER ON 11.03.2015

(a) There have been instances of alleged mistreatment of Indian diplomats in some countries like USA, Slovenia, Romania, Albania and Pakistan during the last three years.

USA: On 12 December 2013, Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Acting Consul General of India in New York was arrested in New York by officers of the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. State Department. She was released on bail on the same day. Dr. Devyani Khobragade was later indicted by a Grand Jury in the US District Court Southern District of New York on 9 January 2014 on charges of 'visa fraud' and 'false statement.' The Government transferred Dr. Khobragade to the Indian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York to safeguard her from further legal issues in the U.S. The U.S. side eventually provided her full diplomatic immunity, enabling her to return to India, although the case remained in court. On 14 January 2014, Dr. Khobragade's lawyer filed a motion in the U.S. Court seeking dismissal of the case and termination of any future legal action against her on the grounds of diplomatic immunity. On March 12, 2014, the court in the U.S. accepted the motion by Dr Khobragade to dismiss the indictment. Subsequently on March 14, 2014, the US attorney filed a second indictment on the same charges. A new warrant for Dr. Khobragade's arrest was subsequently issued. Dr. Devyani Khobragade has since been transferred to MEA Headquarters in New Delhi and the case is subjudice.

Slovenia: Ambassador was asked to remove his bandgala at the Ljubljana Airport on two occasions (November 2013 and June 2014). In January 2014, Ambassador's wife had to undergo intrusive personal security checks at Ljubljana Airport.

Romania: Ambassador was subjected to physical frisking on three occasions in an abusive manner on account of wearing a sari at the Henri Coanda International Airport in Bucharest.

Albania: Ambassador was subjected to physical frisking in June 2012 in an abusive manner at the International Airport in Tirana.

Pakistan: Members of the High Commission of India, Islamabad have been subjected to intrusive surveillance including tailing by the intelligence and security personnel of the Government of Pakistan.

(b) Government raises issues pertaining to ill-treatment of Indian diplomats with the concerned Governments as appropriate with a view to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

USA: The Government conveyed to the U.S. Government its strong objection to the arrest of Dr. Khobragade and the manner in which action was taken, and secured the timely return of Dr. Khobragade to India. The Government has consistently maintained that the case against Dr. Khobragade in the United States has no merit and the Court in the United States had, in the first place, no jurisdiction over Dr. Khobragade. The U.S. Government has expressed regret over the incident.

Slovenia, Romania, Albania: The matter was taken up strongly with respective Foreign Offices. The Foreign Offices assured us to look into the matter with concerned local authorities and sensitize them to prevent such incidents in future.

Pakistan: The matter has been taken up strongly with Government of Pakistan at various levels.

(c) India and the United States have initiated an official dialogue to comprehensively address all aspects related to the case against Dr. Khobragade and all issues arising from differing perspectives on diplomatic privileges and immunities.

All India based personnel in the Missions abroad are regularly sensitized to be more vigilant about their personal security and local security norms and practices. Mission personnel are also encouraged to sensitize host Governments/authorities about relevant cultural issues as appropriate.