

**CHAPTER 39:01**  
**DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES**  
ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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First Schedule - Articles of Vienna Convention having the force of Law in Botswana  
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Act 51, 1968,  
S.I. 11, 1969,  
Act 46, 1977,  
Act 15, 1980.

**An Act to make provision concerning diplomatic privileges and immunities by giving effect to the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations: to make provision for the affording of like privileges and immunities to international organizations and persons attending international conferences and for purposes connected with any of the foregoing purposes.**

[Date of Commencement: 24th January, 1969]

- PART I**  
***Preliminary (s 1)***
- 1. Short title**  
This Act may be cited as the Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act.
- PART II**  
***Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities (ss 2-3)***
- 2. Application of Vienna Convention**  
(1) Subject to section 3 of this Act, the Articles set out in the First Schedule (being the

Articles of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations signed in 1961) shall have the force of law in Botswana and shall for that purpose be construed in accordance with the following provisions of this section.

(2) In those Articles-

**"agents of the receiving State"** shall be construed as including any police officer and any person exercising a power of entry to any premises under any written law;

**"national of the receiving State"** shall be construed as meaning a citizen of Botswana;

**"Ministry for Foreign Affairs or such other ministry as may be agreed"** shall be construed as meaning the department of the Minister responsible for external affairs.

(3) For the purposes of Article 32 a waiver by the head of the mission of any State or any person for the time being performing his functions shall be deemed to be a waiver by that State.

(4) Articles 35, 36 and 40 shall be construed as granting any privilege or immunity which they require to be granted.

(5) The references in Articles 37 and 38 to the extent to which any privileges and immunities are admitted by the receiving State and to additional privileges and immunities that may be granted by the receiving State shall be construed as referring respectively to the extent to which any privileges and immunities may be specified by the President by order published in the *Gazette* and to any additional privileges and immunities that may be so specified.

### **3. Restriction of privileges and immunities**

If it appears to the President that the privileges and immunities accorded to a mission of Botswana in the territory of any State, or to persons connected with that mission, are less than those conferred by this Act on the mission of that State or on persons connected with that mission, the President may by order published in the *Gazette* withdraw such of the privileges and immunities so conferred from the mission of that State or from such persons connected with it as appears to the President to be proper.

## **PART III**

### ***Privileges and Immunities of International Organizations (ss 4-5)***

#### **4. Immunities, privileges and capacities of certain international organizations and persons connected therewith**

(1) This section shall apply to any organization of which one or more sovereign powers or the government or governments thereof are members, designated by the President by order published in the *Gazette*:

Provided that the President may by order published in the *Gazette* apply this section to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

(2) The President, may by order published in the *Gazette*-

- (a) provide that any organization to which this section applies (hereinafter referred to as "the organization") shall, to such extent as may be specified in the order, have the immunities and privileges set out in Part I of the Second Schedule, and shall also have the legal capacities of a body corporate;
- (b) confer upon-
  - (i) any persons who are representatives (whether of governments or not) on any organ of the organization or are members of any committee of the organization or of an organ thereof;
  - (ii) such number of officers of the organization as may be specified in the order, being the holders of such high offices in the organization as may be so specified; and
  - (iii) such persons employed on missions on behalf of the organization as may be so specified,

to such extent as may be specified in the order, the immunities and privileges set out in Part II of the Second Schedule;

- (c) confer upon such other classes of officers and servants of the organization as may be specified in the order, to such extent as may be so specified, the immunities and

privileges set out in Part III of the Second Schedule, and Part IV of the Second Schedule shall have effect for the purpose of extending to the staffs of such representatives and members as are mentioned in paragraph (b)(i) of this subsection and to the families of officers of the organization any immunities and privileges conferred on the representatives, members or officers under that paragraph, except in so far as the operation of the said Part IV is excluded by the order conferring the immunities and privileges:

Provided that the order shall be so framed as to secure that there are not conferred on any person any immunities or privileges greater in extent than those which, at the time of the making of the order, are required to be conferred on that person in order to give effect to any international agreement in that behalf and that no immunity or privilege is conferred upon any person as the representative of the Botswana Government or as a member of the staff of such a representative.

(3) The reference to the officers and servants of the organization in subsection (2)(c) shall be deemed to extend to the contractors to such organization and their employees if any international agreement in that behalf so requires.

(4) For the purposes of this section, an agreement between an organization of the nature described in subsection (1) and the Government of Botswana shall be deemed to be an international agreement.

## **5. Immunities and privileges of judges of, and suitors to, the International Court of Justice**

(1) The President may by order published in the *Gazette* confer on the judges and registrars of the International Court, and on suitors to that Court and their agents, counsel and advocates, such immunities, privileges and facilities as may be required to give effect to any resolution of, or convention approved by, the General Assembly of the United Nations.

(2) In this section the expression "the International Court" means the International Court of Justice set up under the Charter of the United Nations.

### **PART IV**

#### ***International Conferences (s 6)***

## **6. Diplomatic immunities of representatives attending international conferences**

Where a conference is held in Botswana and is attended by the representatives of the Botswana Government and the government or governments of one or more foreign sovereign powers, and it appears to the Minister that doubts may arise as to the extent to which the representatives of such foreign powers and members of their official staffs are entitled to diplomatic immunities, he may-

- (a) compile a list of the persons aforesaid who are entitled to such immunities and cause that list to be published in the *Gazette*; and
- (b) whenever it appears to the Minister that any person ceases or begins to be entitled to such immunities, amend the list and cause a notice of the amendment or, if he thinks fit, an amended list, to be published as aforesaid,

and every representative of a foreign power who is for the time being included in the list shall, for the purpose of any written law or custom relating to the immunities of an envoy of a foreign power credited to Botswana, and of the retinue of such an envoy, be treated as if he were such an envoy, and such of the members of his official staff as are for the time being included in the list shall be treated for the purpose aforesaid as if they were his retinue.

### **PART V**

#### ***Supplementary (ss 7-9)***

## **7. Minister to publish lists**

The Minister shall compile a list of persons appearing to him to be entitled to immunities and privileges in accordance with the principles of customary international law and usage or by or under the provisions of this Act, except-

- (a) children under the age of 18 years of a person so entitled;

(b) any person whose name appears on a list published under section 6, and he shall from time to time amend the list, and shall cause the list and any amendment of the list or any amended list to be published in the *Gazette*.

#### **8. Lists to be producible in evidence**

Every list or notice published under section 6 or 7 shall state the date from which the list or amendment takes or took effect; and the fact that any person is or was included or not included at any time among the persons entitled to the immunities and privileges in question may, if a list of those persons has been so published, be conclusively proved by producing the *Gazette* containing the list or, as the case may be, the last list taking effect before that time, together with the *Gazette* (if any) containing notices of the amendments taking effect before that time, and by showing that the name of that person is or was at that time included or not included in the said list.

#### **9. Evidence of entitlement to immunities or privileges**

If in any proceedings any question arises whether or not any person is entitled to immunities or privileges in accordance with the principles of customary international law and usage or by or under the provisions of this Act or by reason of being included in a list compiled under the provisions of section 6 or 7, a certificate issued by or under the authority of the Minister stating any fact relevant to that question shall be conclusive evidence of that fact.

### **FIRST SCHEDULE ARTICLES OF VIENNA CONVENTION HAVING THE FORCE OF LAW IN BOTSWANA**

(Section 2)

#### **ARTICLE 21**

For the purpose of the present Convention, the following expressions shall have the meanings hereunder assigned to them-

- (a) the "**head of the mission**" is the person charged by the sending State with the duty of acting in that capacity;
- (b) the "**members of the mission**" are the head of the mission and the members of the staff of the mission;
- (c) the "**members of the staff of the mission**" are the members of the diplomatic staff, of the administrative and technical staff and of the service staff of the mission;
- (d) the "**members of the diplomatic staff**" are the members of the staff of the mission having diplomatic rank;
- (e) a "**diplomatic agent**" is the head of the mission or a member of the diplomatic staff of the mission;
- (f) the "**members of the administrative and technical staff**" are the members of the mission employed in the administrative and technical service of the mission;
- (g) the "**members of the service staff**" are the members of the staff of the mission in the domestic service of the mission;
- (h) a "**private servant**" is a person who is in the domestic service of a member of the mission and who is not an employee of the sending State;
- (i) the "**premises of the mission**" are the buildings or parts of buildings and the land ancillary thereto, irrespective of ownership, used for the purposes of the mission including the residence of the head of the mission.

#### **ARTICLE 22**

1. The premises of the mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter them, except with the consent of the head of the mission.
2. 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.
3. The premises of the mission, their furnishings and other property thereon and the means of transport of the mission shall be immune from search, requisition, attachment or execution.

#### **ARTICLE 23**

1. The sending State and the head of the mission shall be exempt from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the mission, whether owned or leased, other than such as represent payment for specific services rendered.
2. The exemption from taxation referred to in this Article shall not apply to such dues and taxes payable under the law of the receiving State by persons contracting with the sending State or the head of the mission.

#### **ARTICLE 24**

The archives and documents of the mission shall be inviolable at any time and wherever they may be.

#### **ARTICLE 27**

1. The receiving State shall permit and protect free communication on the part of the mission for all official purposes. In communicating with the Government and other missions and consulates of the sending State, wherever situated, the mission may employ all appropriate means, including diplomatic couriers and messages in code or cipher. However, the mission may install and use a wireless transmitter only with the consent of the receiving State.
2. The official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable. Official correspondence means all correspondence relating to the mission and its functions.
3. The diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained.
4. The packages constituting the diplomatic bag must bear visible external marks of their character and may contain only diplomatic documents or articles intended for official use.
5. The diplomatic courier, who shall be provided with an official document indicating his status and the number of packages constituting the diplomatic bag, shall be protected by the receiving State in the performance of his functions. He shall enjoy personal inviolability and shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention.
6. The sending State or the mission may designate diplomatic couriers *ad hoc*. In such cases the provisions of paragraph 5 of this Article shall also apply, except that the immunities therein mentioned shall cease to apply when such a courier has delivered to the consignee the diplomatic bag in his charge.
7. A diplomatic bag may be entrusted to the captain of a commercial aircraft scheduled to land at an authorized port of entry. He shall be provided with an official document indicating the number of packages constituting the bag but he shall not be considered to be a diplomatic courier. The mission may send one of its members to take possession of the diplomatic bag directly and freely from the captain of the aircraft.

#### **ARTICLE 28**

The fees and charges levied by the mission in the course of its official duties shall be exempt from all dues and taxes.

#### **ARTICLE 29**

The person of a diplomatic agent shall be inviolable. He shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. The receiving State shall treat him with due respect and shall take all appropriate steps to prevent any attack on his person, freedom or dignity.

#### **ARTICLE 30**

1. The private residence of a diplomatic agent shall enjoy the same inviolability and protection as the premises of the mission.
2. His papers, correspondence and, except as provided in paragraph 3 of Article 31, his property, shall likewise enjoy inviolability.

#### **ARTICLE 31**

1. A diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State. He shall also enjoy immunity from its civil and administrative jurisdiction, except in the case of-
  - (a) a real action relating to private immovable property situated in the territory of the receiving State, unless he holds it on behalf of the sending State for the purposes of the mission;
  - (b) an action relating to succession in which the diplomatic agent is involved as executor, administrator, heir or legatee as a private person and not on behalf of the sending State;
  - (c) an action relating to any professional or commercial activity exercised by the diplomatic agent in the receiving State outside his official functions.
2. A diplomatic agent is not obliged to give evidence as a witness.
3. No measures of execution may be taken in respect of a diplomatic agent except in the cases coming under subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of paragraph 1 of this Article, and provided that the measures concerned can be taken without infringing the inviolability of his person or of his residence.

4. The immunity of a diplomatic agent from the jurisdiction of the receiving State does not exempt him from the jurisdiction of the sending State.

#### **ARTICLE 32**

1. The immunity from jurisdiction of diplomatic agents and of persons enjoying immunity under Article 37 may be waived by the sending State.
2. The waiver must always be express.
3. The initiation of proceedings by a diplomatic agent or by a person enjoying immunity from jurisdiction under Article 37 shall preclude him from invoking immunity from jurisdiction in respect of any counter-claim directly connected with the principal claim.
4. Waiver of immunity from jurisdiction in respect of civil or administrative proceedings shall not be held to imply waiver of immunity in respect of the execution of the judgment, for which a separate waiver shall be necessary.

#### **ARTICLE 33**

1. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 3 of this Article, a diplomatic agent shall with respect to services rendered for the sending State be exempt from social security provisions which may be in force in the receiving State.
2. The exemption provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article shall also apply to private servants who are in the sole employ of a diplomatic agent, on condition-
  - (a) that they are not nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving State; and
  - (b) that they are covered by the social security provisions which may be in force in the sending State or a third State.
3. A diplomatic agent who employs persons to whom the exemption provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article does not apply shall observe the obligations which the social security provisions of the receiving State impose upon employers.
4. The exemption provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall not preclude voluntary participation in the social security system of the receiving State provided that such participation is permitted by that State.
5. The provisions of this Article shall not affect bilateral or multilateral agreements concerning social security concluded previously and shall not prevent the conclusion of such agreements in the future.

#### **ARTICLE 34**

A diplomatic agent shall be exempt from all dues and taxes, personal or real, national, regional or municipal, except-

- (a) indirect taxes of a kind which are normally incorporated in the price of goods or services;
- (b) dues and taxes on private immovable property situated in the territory of the receiving State, unless he holds it on behalf of the sending State for the purposes of the mission;
- (c) estate, succession or inheritance duties levied by the receiving State, subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 of Article 39;
- (d) dues and taxes on private income having its source in the receiving State and capital taxes on investments made in commercial undertakings in the receiving State;
- (e) charges levied for specific services rendered;
- (f) registration, court or record fees, mortgage dues and stamp duty, with respect to immovable property, subject to the provisions of Article 23.

#### **ARTICLE 35**

The receiving State shall exempt diplomatic agents from all personal services, from all public service of any kind whatsoever, and from military obligations such as those connected with requisitioning, military contributions and billeting.

#### **ARTICLE 36**

1. The receiving State shall, in accordance with such laws and regulations as it may adopt, permit entry of and grant exemption from all customs duties, taxes, and related charges other than charges for storage, cartage, and similar services, on-
  - (a) articles for the official use of the mission;
  - (b) articles for the personal use of a diplomatic agent or members of his family forming part of his household, including articles intended for his establishment.
2. The personal baggage of a diplomatic agent shall be exempt from inspection, unless there are serious grounds for presuming that it contains articles not covered by the exemptions mentioned in paragraph 1

of this Article, or articles the import or export of which is prohibited by the law or controlled by the quarantine regulations of the receiving State. Such inspection shall be conducted only in the presence of the diplomatic agent or of his authorized representative.

#### **ARTICLE 37**

1. The members of the family of a diplomatic agent forming part of his household shall, if they are not nationals of the receiving State, enjoy the privileges and immunities specified in Articles 29 to 36.
2. Members of the administrative and technical staff of the mission, together with members of their families forming part of their respective households, shall, if they are not nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving State, enjoy the privileges and immunities specified in Articles 29 to 35, except that the immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction of the receiving State specified in paragraph 1 of Article 31 shall not extend to acts performed outside the course of their duties. They shall also enjoy the privileges specified in Article 36, paragraph 1, in respect of articles imported at the time of first installation.
3. Members of the service staff of the mission who are not nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving State shall enjoy immunity in respect of acts performed in the course of their duties, exemption from dues and taxes on the emoluments they receive by reason of their employment and the exemption contained in Article 33.
4. Private servants of members of the mission shall, if they are not nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving State, be exempt from dues and taxes on the emoluments they receive by reason of their employment. In other respects, they may enjoy privileges and immunities only to the extent admitted by the receiving State. However, the receiving State must exercise its jurisdiction over those persons in such a manner as not to interfere unduly with the performance of the functions of the mission.

#### **ARTICLE 38**

1. Except in so far as additional privileges and immunities may be granted by the receiving State, a diplomatic agent who is a national of or permanently resident in that State shall enjoy only immunity from jurisdiction, and inviolability, in respect of official acts performed in the exercise of his functions.
2. Other members of the staff of the mission and private servants who are nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving State shall enjoy privileges and immunities only to the extent admitted by the receiving State. However, the receiving State must exercise its jurisdiction over those persons in such a manner as not to interfere unduly with the performance of the functions of the mission.

#### **ARTICLE 39**

1. Every person entitled to privileges and immunities shall enjoy them from the moment he enters the territory of the receiving State on proceeding to take up his post or, if already in its territory, from the moment when his appointment is notified to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs or such other ministry as may be agreed.
2. When the functions of a person enjoying privileges and immunities have come to an end, such privileges and immunities shall normally cease at the moment when he leaves the country, or on expiry of a reasonable period in which to do so, but shall subsist until that time, even in case of armed conflict. However, with respect to acts performed by such person in the exercise of his functions as a member of the mission, immunity shall continue to subsist.
3. In case of the death of a member of the mission, the members of his family shall continue to enjoy the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled until the expiry of a reasonable period in which to leave the country.
4. In the event of the death of a member of the mission not a national of or permanently resident in the receiving State or a member of his family forming part of his household, the receiving State shall permit the withdrawal of the movable property of the deceased, with the exception of any property acquired in the country the export of which was prohibited at the time of his death. Estate, succession and inheritance duties shall not be levied on movable property the presence of which in the receiving State was due solely to the presence there of the deceased as a member of the mission or as a member of the family of a member of the mission.

#### **ARTICLE 40**

1. If a diplomatic agent passes through or is in the territory of a third State, which has granted him a passport visa if such visa was necessary, while proceeding to take up or to return to his post, or when returning to his own country, the third State shall accord him inviolability and such other immunities as may be required to ensure his transit or return. The same shall apply in the case of any members of his

family enjoying privileges or immunities who are accompanying the diplomatic agent, or travelling separately to join him or to return to their country.

2. In circumstances similar to those specified in paragraph 1 of this Article, third States shall not hinder the passage of members of the administrative and technical or service staff of a mission, and of members of their families, through their territories.

3. Third States shall accord to official correspondence and other official communications in transit, including messages in code or cipher, the same freedom and protection as is accorded by the receiving State. They shall accord to diplomatic couriers, who have been granted a passport visa if such visa was necessary, and diplomatic bags in transit the same inviolability and protection as the receiving State is bound to accord.

4. The obligations of third States under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this Article shall also apply to the persons mentioned respectively in those paragraphs, and to official communications and diplomatic bags, whose presence in the territory of the third State is due to *force majeure*.

## **SECOND SCHEDULE IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES**

(Section 4)

### **PART I**

#### ***Immunities and Privileges of the Organization***

1. Immunity from suit and legal process.
2. The like inviolability of official archives and premises occupied as offices as is accorded in respect of the official archives and premises of an envoy of a foreign sovereign power accredited to Botswana.
3. The like exemption or relief from taxes and rates, other than on the importation of goods, as is accorded to a foreign sovereign power.
4. Exemption from taxes on the importation of goods directly imported by the organization for its official use in Botswana or for exportation, or on the importation of any publications of the organization directly imported by it, such exemption to be subject to compliance with such conditions as the Minister for the time being responsible for finance may prescribe for the protection of the revenue.
5. Exemption from prohibitions and restrictions on importation or exportation in the case of goods directly imported or exported by the organization for its official use and in the case of any publications of the organization directly imported or exported by it.
6. The right to avail itself, for telegraph communications sent by it and containing only matter intended for publication by the press or for broadcasting (including communications addressed to or despatched from places outside Botswana), of any reduced rates applicable for the corresponding service in the case of press telegrams.

*Country Representative*

### **PART II**

#### ***Immunities and Privileges of Representatives, Members of Committees, High Officers and Persons on Missions***

7. The like immunity from suit and legal process as is accorded to an envoy of a foreign sovereign Power accredited to Botswana.
8. The like inviolability of residence is accorded to such an envoy.
9. The like exemption or relief from taxes as is accorded to such an envoy.

### **PART III**

#### ***Immunities and Privileges of other Officers and Servants***

10. Immunity from suit and legal process in respect of things done or omitted to be done in the course of the performance of official duties.
11. Exemption from income tax in respect of emoluments received as an officer or servant of the organization.

### **PART IV**

#### ***Immunities and Privileges of Official Staff's and of High Officers' Families***

12. Where any person is entitled to any such immunities and privileges as are mentioned in Part II of this Schedule as a representative on any organ of the organization or a member of any committee of the organization or of an organ thereof, his official staff accompanying him as such a representative or member shall also be entitled to those immunities and privileges to the same extent as the retinue of any

envoy of a foreign sovereign power accredited to Botswana is entitled to the immunities and privileges accorded to the envoy.

**13.**Where any person is entitled to any such immunities and privileges as are mentioned in Part II of this Schedule as an officer of the organization, that person's wife or husband and children under the age of 21 shall also be entitled to those immunities and privileges to the same extent as the wife or husband and children of an envoy of a foreign power accredited to Botswana are entitled to the immunities and privileges accorded to the envoy.