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SPECIAL MISSIONS

Articles 20 to 25 as adopted
by the Drafting Committee

Article 20

Inviolability of archives and documents

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

Article 21

Freedom of movement

Subject to its laws and regulations concerning zones entry into which is prohibited or regulated for reasons of national security, the receiving State shall ensure to all members of the special mission freedom of movement and travel on its territory to the extent that this is necessary for the performance of the functions of the special mission.

Article 22

Freedom of communication

1. The receiving State shall permit and protect free communication on the part of the special mission for all official purposes. In communicating with the Government, the diplomatic missions, the consular posts and other special missions of the sending State, or with sections of the same mission, wherever situated, the special mission may employ all appropriate means, including couriers and messages in code or cipher. However, the special mission may install and use a wireless transmitter only with the consent of the receiving State.

2. The official correspondence of the special mission shall be inviolable. Official correspondence means all correspondence relating to the special mission and its functions.

3. The bag of the special mission shall not be opened or detained.

4. The packages constituting the bag of the special mission must bear visible external marks of their character and may contain only documents or articles intended for the official use of the special mission.

5. The courier of the special mission, who shall be provided with an official document indicating his status and the number of packages constituting the 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 special mission may designate couriers ad hoc of the special mission. 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 the courier ad hoc has delivered to the consignee the special mission's bag in his charge.

7. The bag of the special mission may be entrusted to the captain of a ship or 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 courier of the special mission. By arrangement with the appropriate authorities, the special mission may send one of its members to take possession of the bag directly and freely from the captain of the ship or of the aircraft.

Article 23

Exemption of the special mission from taxation

1. The sending State and the members of the special mission acting on its behalf shall be exempt from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the special mission, 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 with a member of the special mission.

Article 24

Personal inviolability

The person of the representatives of the sending State in the special mission and of the members of its diplomatic staff shall be inviolable. They shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. The receiving State shall treat them with due respect and shall take all appropriate steps to prevent any attack on their person, freedom or dignity.

Article 25

Inviolability of the private accommodation

1. The private accommodation of the representatives of the sending State in the special mission and of the members of its diplomatic staff shall enjoy the same inviolability and protection as the premises of the special mission.
2. Their papers, correspondence and, subject to the proviso in article 26, paragraph 4, their property shall likewise enjoy inviolability.