

1741 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. EXPULSION OF
FIRST SECRETARY IN THE HIGH
COMMISSION OF INDIA
IN KAMPALA

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): Mr Speaker, Sir, as per your directions, I would like to make two statements, one on Uganda and the other on Vietnam.

The House is aware of the statement which I made yesterday on the subject of the expulsion by the Government of Uganda of Shri N. N. Desai, First Secretary in our High Commission at Kampala. I have taken note of the deep concern of the House about this incident and the feelings about this action of the Government of Uganda.

In the note which our High Commissioner sent to the Ugandan Foreign Office on 19 December, he strongly protested against the unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations they made against Shri Desai and stressed that the expulsion orders given to Shri Desai were on a flimsy pretext and without any justification. He also stated categorically this could not but have repercussions on the existing relations between Uganda and India for which the responsibility would rest entirely with the Government of Uganda and further that the Government of India reserved their right to react as appropriate.

Our High Commissioner later sent a second protest note to the Ugandan Foreign Officer demanding that the allegation against Shri Desai of improper action and behaviour not in keeping with his diplomatic accreditation should be either substantiated urgently or withdrawn categorically in the interest of Indo-Ugandan relations.

The High Commissioner is awaiting a reply from the Ugandan Government to his two written protests.

In New Delhi also we have taken up the matter strongly with the Acting High Commissioner of Uganda, adding that the Ugandan Government bears full responsibility for all the consequences which may result from their action which is contrary to all diplomatic norms.

Our High Commissioner in Kampala has also sought an interview the Foreign Minister of Uganda at the earliest possible moment to convey strong feelings and views concerning this incident. In due course after our High Commissioner has met the Foreign Minister he will send us a full report about his talks.

The situation which has arisen as a result of the expulsion of our First Secretary has caused us very serious concern. We have to examine all aspects before we take a final decision. As I informed the House yesterday we are keeping a close watch on developments in Uganda and will take whatever action we consider appropriate to safeguard our interests.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): Has Government taken any action?

SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH: I have indicated in my statement that action will be taken at the appropriate time. We are awaiting a fuller report and unless and until we have seen and examined the report, we cannot take any action.

MR. SPEAKER: You may make your next statement.