

THE SOUTHERN RHODESIA (IMMUNITY FOR PERSONS ATTENDING MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS) ORDER 1979

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The Privy Council met at 10.00 this morning at Buckingham Palace when the Order was approved.

The purpose is to grant immunity to people who are in the UK for consultations on Rhodesia. It gives the same immunity as enjoyed by those who have accredited diplomatic immunity.

A quorum of 3 is required. Those present were Sir Ian Gilmour (acting as Lord President), Sir Michael Havers (Attorney General) and Mr Angus Maude (Paymaster General). Mr Leigh, Clerk of the Court, was also in attendance. The Queen was present.

The Order will be laid before both Houses early this afternoon (FCO are running off 250 copies for the Library). It is subject to affirmative approval within 28 days when Parliament is sitting. The Order is effective from 0.01 hours today.

It is for FCO to initiate the debate, ie seek the approval of the House. If not approved by the House, the Order falls.

We do not know of any precedent.

(2) Subject to paragraph (5) of this Article, this Article applies to a person if his presence in the United Kingdom is countenanced by the Secretary of State in connection with his attendance at meetings or consultations convoked by or with the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom for the purpose of achieving a peaceful settlement of the situation created by unconstitutional action in Southern Rhodesia.

(3) The Secretary of State may compile and keep amended up-to-date a list of persons to whom this Article for the time being applies, showing in respect of each person named in it the date from which he is a person to whom this Article applies and, where appropriate, the date after which he is to cease to be such a person, and shall cause any such list, and any amendment to it or any amended list, to be published without delay in the London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes; and the inclusion of the name of any person in any such list, showing, in relation to any given date, that he is a person to whom this Article applies, shall be conclusive proof of that fact.

(4) The Secretary of State may, by writing under his hand, certify in respect of any person that, in relation to any date specified in the certificate or in relation to any period so specified, that person is a person to whom this Article applies; and any such certificate shall, irrespective of the contents of any list compiled in pursuance of paragraph (3) of this Article, be conclusive proof of the fact so certified.

(5) A person shall not be regarded, in relation to any given date, as a person to whom this Article applies unless he is shown or certified to be such a person, in relation to that date, either by a list compiled in pursuance of paragraph (3) of this Article or by a certificate given in pursuance of paragraph (4).

(6) Nothing in this Article shall be construed as affecting, in relation to any person to whom this Article applies, the operation of any provision of law regulating the entry of persons into the United Kingdom, their stay in the United Kingdom or their departure from the United Kingdom.