

# SPG Bill Passed in Lok Sabha amidst Walkouts and Protests

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The Lok Sabha recently passed the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019. As per the changes made, the SPG will now protect the Prime Minister and members of his immediate family residing at him at his official residence. The bill has made amendments to the SPG Act of 1988 which was an act of the Parliament of India.

It will also provide security to former Prime Ministers and their immediate family members staying with them at the residence allotted for a period of five years from the date on which they cease to hold the office. This was in contrast with the demand of the Opposition that the SPG cover for the former PM and their family members be in place for the rest of their lives and not just five years.

Amit Shah, the Union Minister for Home Affairs, said that the main aim of bringing this amendment is to make SPG more efficient. This would ensure that no omission happens in carrying out its core mandate, as the security of the Prime Minister, as Head of the Government, is of paramount importance for Government, governance and national security.

The SPG Bill states that when the proximate security is withdrawn from a former prime minister then such proximate security shall also stand withdrawn from members of his or her immediate family.

The SPG Act amendment bill comes days after the Centre removed SPG cover for the Gandhi family. Sonia Gandhi, son Rahul and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were up until now being protected by the SPG. Earlier, SPG cover was also removed for former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Since then, Manmohan Singh as well as the Gandhi are being protected under the “Z plus” security cover of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).