

The Convention was  
previously published as  
Miscellaneous No. 18  
(1970), Cmnd. 4485

PRIVATE  
INTERNATIONAL  
LAW



Treaty Series No. 85 (1975)

# Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance

New York, 20 June to 31 December 1956

[The United Kingdom Instrument of Accession was deposited on 13 March 1975 and the  
Convention entered into force for the United Kingdom on 12 April 1975]

*Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
by Command of Her Majesty  
July 1975*

LONDON  
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

26p net

Cmnd. 6084

**CONVENTION  
ON THE RECOVERY ABROAD OF MAINTENANCE**

**PREAMBLE**

*Considering* the urgency of solving the humanitarian problem resulting from the situation of persons in need dependent for their maintenance on persons abroad.

*Considering* that the prosecution or enforcement abroad of claims for maintenance gives rise to serious legal and practical difficulties, and

*Determined* to provide a means to solve such problems and to overcome such difficulties,

*The Contracting Parties have agreed as follows :*

**ARTICLE 1**

**Scope of the Convention**

1. The purpose of this Convention is to facilitate the recovery of maintenance to which a person, hereinafter referred to as claimant, who is in the territory of one of the Contracting Parties, claims to be entitled from another person, hereinafter referred to as respondent, who is subject to the jurisdiction of another Contracting Party. This purpose shall be effected through the offices of agencies which will hereinafter be referred to as Transmitting and Receiving Agencies.

2. The remedies provided for in this Convention are in addition to, and not in substitution for, any remedies available under municipal or international law.

**ARTICLE 2**

**Designation of Agencies**

1. Each Contracting Party shall, at the time when the instrument of ratification or accession is deposited, designate one or more judicial or administrative authorities which shall act in its territory as Transmitting Agencies.

2. Each Contracting Party shall, at the time when the instrument of ratification or accession is deposited, designate a public or private body which shall act in its territory as Receiving Agency.

3. Each Contracting Party shall promptly communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the designations made under paragraphs 1 and 2 and any changes made in respect thereof.

4. Transmitting and Receiving Agencies may communicate directly with Transmitting and Receiving Agencies of other Contracting Parties.

## ARTICLE 3

### Application to Transmitting Agency

1. Where a claimant is in the territory of one Contracting Party, hereinafter referred to as the State of the claimant, and the respondent is subject to the jurisdiction of another Contracting Party, hereinafter referred to as the State of the respondent, the claimant may make application to a Transmitting Agency in the State of the claimant for the recovery of maintenance from the respondent.

2. Each Contracting Party shall inform the Secretary-General as to the evidence normally required under the law of the State of the Receiving Agency for the proof of maintenance claims, of the manner in which such evidence should be submitted, and of other requirements to be complied with under such law.

3. The application shall be accompanied by all relevant documents, including, where necessary, a power of attorney authorising the Receiving Agency to act, or to appoint some other person to act, on behalf of the claimant. It shall also be accompanied by a photograph of the claimant and, where available, a photograph of the respondent.

4. The Transmitting Agency shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the requirements of the law of the State of the Receiving Agency are complied with; and, subject to the requirements of such law, the application shall include:

- (a) the full name, address, date of birth, nationality, and occupation of the claimant, and the name and address of any legal representative of the claimant;
- (b) the full name of the respondent, and, so far as known to the claimant, his addresses during the preceding five years, date of birth, nationality, and occupation;
- (c) particulars of the grounds upon which the claim is based and of the relief sought, and any other relevant information such as the financial and family circumstances of the claimant and the respondent.

## ARTICLE 4

### Transmission of documents

1. The Transmitting Agency shall transmit the documents to the Receiving Agency of the State of the respondent, unless satisfied that the application is not made in good faith.

2. Before transmitting such documents, the Transmitting Agency shall satisfy itself that they are regular as to form, in accordance with the law of the State of the claimant.

3. The Transmitting Agency may express to the Receiving Agency an opinion as to the merits of the case and may recommend that free legal aid and exemption from costs be given to the claimant.

## ARTICLE 5

### **Transmission of judgments and other judicial acts**

1. The Transmitting Agency shall, at the request of the claimant, transmit, under the provisions of article 4, any order, final or provisional, and any other judicial act, obtained by the claimant for the payment of maintenance in a competent tribunal of any of the Contracting Parties, and, where necessary and possible, the record of the proceedings in which such order was made.

2. The orders and judicial acts referred to in the preceding paragraph may be transmitted in substitution for or in addition to the documents mentioned in article 3.

3. Proceedings under article 6 may include, in accordance with the law of the State of the respondent, exequatur or registration proceedings or an action based upon the act transmitted under paragraph 1.

## ARTICLE 6

### **Functions of the Receiving Agency**

1. The Receiving Agency shall, subject always to the authority given by the claimant, take, on behalf of the claimant, all appropriate steps for the recovery of maintenance, including the settlement of the claim and, where necessary, the institution and prosecution of an action for maintenance and the execution of any order or other judicial act for the payment of maintenance.

2. The Receiving Agency shall keep the Transmitting Agency currently informed. If it is unable to act, it shall inform the Transmitting Agency of its reasons and return the documents.

3. Notwithstanding anything in this Convention, the law applicable in the determination of all questions arising in any such action or proceedings shall be the law of the State of the respondent, including its private international law.

## ARTICLE 7

### **Letters of request**

If provision is made for letters of request in the laws of the two Contracting Parties concerned, the following rules shall apply:

- (a) A tribunal hearing an action for maintenance may address letters of request for further evidence, documentary or otherwise, either to the competent tribunal of the other Contracting Party or to any other authority or institution designated by the other Contracting Party in whose territory the request is to be executed.
- (b) In order that the parties may attend or be represented, the requested authority shall give notice of the date on which and the place at which the proceedings requested are to take place to the Receiving Agency and the Transmitting Agency concerned, and to the respondent.

- (c) Letters of request shall be executed with all convenient speed; in the event of such letters of request not being executed within four months from the receipt of the letters by the requested authority, the reasons for such non-execution or for such delay shall be communicated to the requesting authority.
- (d) The execution of letters of request shall not give rise to reimbursement of fees or costs of any kind whatsoever.
- (e) Execution of letters of request may only be refused:
  - (1) If the authenticity of the letters is not established;
  - (2) If the Contracting Party in whose territory the letters are to be executed deems that its sovereignty or safety would be compromised thereby.

## ARTICLE 8

### **Variation of orders**

The provisions of this Convention apply also to applications for the variation of maintenance orders.

## ARTICLE 9

### **Exemptions and facilities**

1. In proceedings under this Convention, claimants shall be accorded equal treatment and the same exemptions in the payment of costs and charges as are given to residents or nationals of the State where the proceedings are pending.
2. Claimants shall not be required, because of their status as aliens or non-residents, to furnish any bond or make any payment or deposit as security for costs or otherwise.
3. Transmitting and Receiving Agencies shall not charge any fees in respect of services rendered under this Convention.

## ARTICLE 10

### **Transfer of funds**

A Contracting Party, under whose law the transfer of funds abroad is restricted, shall accord the highest priority to the transfer of funds payable as maintenance or to cover expenses in respect of proceedings under this Convention.

## ARTICLE 11

### **Federal State clause**

In the case of a Federal or non-unitary State, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of the federal legislative authority, the obligations of the Federal Government shall to this extent be the same as those of Parties which are not Federal States;

- (b) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of constituent States, provinces or cantons which are not, under the constitutional system of the Federation, bound to take legislative action, the Federal Government shall bring such articles with a favourable recommendation to the notice of the appropriate authorities of States, provinces or cantons at the earliest possible moment;
- (c) A Federal State Party to this Convention shall, at the request of any other Contracting Party transmitted through the Secretary-General, supply a statement of the law and practice of the Federation and its constituent units in regard to any particular provision of the Convention, showing the extent to which effect has been given to that provision by legislative or other action.

## ARTICLE 12

### **Territorial application**

The provisions of this Convention shall extend or be applicable equally to all non-self-governing, trust or other territories for the international relations of which a Contracting Party is responsible, unless the latter, on ratifying or acceding to this Convention, has given notice that the Convention shall not apply to any one or more of such territories. Any Contracting Party making such a declaration may, at any time thereafter, by notification to the Secretary-General, extend the application of the Convention to any or all of such territories.

## ARTICLE 13

### **Signature, ratification and accession**

1. This Convention shall be open for signature until 31 December 1956 on behalf of any Member of the United Nations, any non-member State which is a Party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice,<sup>(1)</sup> or member of a specialised agency, and any other non-member State which has been invited by the Economic and Social Council to become a Party to the Convention.

2. This Convention shall be ratified. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General.

3. This Convention may be acceded to at any time on behalf of any of the States referred to in paragraph 1 of this article. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General.

## ARTICLE 14

### **Entry into force**

1. This Convention shall come into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit of the third instrument of ratification or accession in accordance with article 13.<sup>(2)</sup>

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<sup>(1)</sup> Treaty Series No. 67 (1964), Cmd. 7015.

<sup>(2)</sup> The Convention entered into force on 25 May 1957.

2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the third instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of the deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

## ARTICLE 15

### **Denunciation**

1. Any Contracting Party may denounce this Convention by notification to the Secretary-General. Such denunciation may also apply to some or all of the territories mentioned in Article 12.

2. Denunciation shall take effect one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General, except that it shall not prejudice cases pending at the time it becomes effective.

## ARTICLE 16

### **Settlement of disputes**

If a dispute should arise between Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation or application of this Convention, and if such dispute has not been settled by other means, it shall be referred to the International Court of Justice. The dispute shall be brought before the Court either by the notification of a special agreement or by a unilateral application of one of the parties to the dispute.

## ARTICLE 17

### **Reservations**

1. In the event that any State submits a reservation to any of the articles of this Convention at the time of ratification or accession, the Secretary-General shall communicate the text of the reservation to all States which are Parties to this Convention, and to the other States referred to in article 13. Any Contracting Party which objects to the reservation may, within a period of ninety days from the date of the communication, notify the Secretary-General that it does not accept it, and the Convention shall not then enter into force as between the objecting State and the State making the reservation. Any State thereafter acceding may make such notification at the time of its accession.

2. A Contracting Party may at any time withdraw a reservation previously made and shall notify the Secretary-General of such withdrawal.

## ARTICLE 18

### **Reciprocity**

A Contracting Party shall not be entitled to avail itself of this Convention against other Contracting Parties except to the extent that it is itself bound by the Convention.

## ARTICLE 19

### **Notifications by the Secretary-General**

1. The Secretary-General shall inform all Members of the United Nations and the non-member States referred to in article 13:

- (a) of communications under paragraph 3 of article 2;
- (b) of information received under paragraph 2 of article 3;
- (c) of declarations and notifications made under article 12;
- (d) of signatures, ratifications and accessions under article 13;
- (e) of the date on which the Convention has entered into force under paragraph 1 of article 14;
- (f) of denunciations made under paragraph 1 of article 15;
- (g) of reservations and notifications made under article 17.

2. The Secretary-General shall also inform all Contracting Parties of requests for revision and replies thereto received under article 20.

## ARTICLE 20

### **Revision**

1. Any Contracting Party may request revision of this Convention at any time by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the notification to each Contracting Party with a request that such Contracting Party reply within four months whether it desires the convening of a Conference to consider the proposed revision. If a majority of the Contracting Parties favour the convening of a Conference it shall be convened by the Secretary-General.

## ARTICLE 21

### **Languages and deposit of Convention**

The original of this Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts<sup>(3)</sup> are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General, who shall transmit certified true copies thereof to all States referred to in article 13.

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<sup>(3)</sup> The Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish texts of the Convention are published in United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 268, available through Agency Section, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London SE1 9NY—Tel. 01-928 6977, ext. 410.



## SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS

<i>Signatory State</i>	<i>Date of Deposit of Instrument of Ratification</i>
Austria ... ..	16 July 1969
Bolivia ... ..	
Brazil ... ..	14 November 1960
Cambodia ... ..	
Ceylon ... ..	7 August 1958
China (Nationalist authorities) ... ..	25 June 1957
Colombia ... ..	
Cuba ... ..	
Denmark ... ..	22 June 1959
Dominican Republic ... ..	
Ecuador ... ..	4 June 1974
El Salvador ... ..	
France* ... ..	24 June 1960
Germany, Federal Republic of (also applies to Land Berlin) ... ..	20 July 1959
Greece ... ..	1 November 1965
Guatemala ... ..	25 April 1957
Haiti ... ..	12 February 1958
Israel* ... ..	4 April 1957
Italy ... ..	28 July 1958
Mexico ... ..	
Monaco ... ..	28 June 1961
Netherlands* ... ..	31 July 1962
Philippine Republic ... ..	21 March 1968
Sweden* ... ..	1 October 1958
Vatican City ... ..	5 October 1964
Yugoslavia ... ..	29 May 1959

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\* For texts of reservations, objections, declarations, etc., see pages 12 to 14.

## ACCESSIONS

<i>State</i>	<i>Date of Deposit of Instrument of Accession</i>
Algeria* ... ..	10 September 1969
Argentine Republic* ... ..	29 November 1972
Barbados ... ..	18 June 1970
Belgium ... ..	1 July 1966
Central African Republic ... ..	15 October 1962
Chile ... ..	9 January 1961
Czechoslovakia ... ..	3 October 1958
Finland ... ..	13 September 1962
Hungary ... ..	23 July 1957
Luxembourg ... ..	1 November 1971
Morocco ... ..	18 March 1957
Niger ... ..	15 February 1965
Norway ... ..	25 October 1957
Pakistan ... ..	14 July 1959
Poland* ... ..	13 October 1960
Portugal ... ..	25 January 1965
Spain ... ..	6 October 1966
Tunisia* ... ..	16 October 1968
Turkey ... ..	2 June 1971
United Kingdom* ... ..	13 March 1975
Upper Volta ... ..	27 August 1962

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\* For texts of reservations, objections, declarations, etc., see pages 12 to 14.

## RESERVATIONS, OBJECTIONS, DECLARATIONS, ETC.

### ALGERIA

The instrument of accession contains the following reservation:

#### *Translation*

The Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 16 of the Convention concerning the competence of the International Court of Justice and affirms that the agreement of all the parties concerned is required in each case before a dispute can be brought before the International Court of Justice.

### ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

The instrument of accession contains the following reservations<sup>(4)</sup>:

#### *Translation*

- (a) The Argentine Republic reserves the right, with respect to Article 10 of the Convention, to restrict the application of the expression "highest priority" in the light of the provisions governing exchange controls in Argentina.
- (b) In the event that another Contracting Party extends the application of the Convention to territories over which the Argentine Republic exercises sovereignty, such extension shall in no way affect the latter's rights (the reference is to Article 12 of the Convention).
- (c) The Argentine Government reserves the right not to apply the procedure provided for in Article 16 of the Convention in any dispute directly or indirectly related to the territories referred to in its declaration concerning Article 12.

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In a communication received on 21 April 1973, the Government of Czechoslovakia informed the Secretary-General of the following:

"The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic does not regard as valid the reservation to Article 10 of the Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance made by the Government of Argentina."

### FRANCE

The instrument of ratification contains the following declaration:

#### *Translation*

- (a) That the Convention shall apply to the territories of the French Republic, namely: the metropolitan departments, the departments of Algeria, the departments of the Oases and of Saoura, the departments of Guadeloupe, Guiana, Martinique and Réunion and the Overseas Territories (St. Pierre and Miquelon, French Somaliland, the Comoro Archipelago, New Caledonia and Dependencies and French Polynesia);
- (b) That this application may be extended, by subsequent notification, to the other States of the Community or to one or more such States.

### ISRAEL

On ratifying the Convention the Government of Israel made the following reservations:

"Article 5: The Transmitting Agency shall transmit under paragraph 1 any order, final or provisional, and any other judicial act, obtained by the claimant for the payment of maintenance in a competent tribunal of Israel, and, where necessary and possible, the record of the proceedings in which such order was made.

Article 10: Israel reserves the right:

- (a) to take the necessary measures to prevent transfers of funds under this Article for purposes other than the *bona fide* payment of existing maintenance obligations;
- (b) to limit the amounts transferable pursuant to this Article, to amounts necessary for subsistence."

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<sup>(4)</sup> See also objections by Czechoslovakia and the United Kingdom.

## NETHERLANDS

The instrument of ratification contains the following reservation:

### *Translation*

The Government of the Kingdom makes the following reservation with regard to Article 1 of the Convention: the recovery of maintenance shall not be facilitated by virtue of this Article if, the claimant and the respondent being both in the Netherlands, or, respectively, in Surinam, the Netherlands Antilles or Netherlands New Guinea, and assistance having been granted or similar arrangements made under the Assistance to the Needy Act (*Loi sur l'Assistance des Pauvres*), no recovery was in general obtained for such assistance from the respondent, having regard to the circumstances of the case in question.

On transmitting the instrument of ratification the Government of the Netherlands made the following statement:

"The Convention has for the time being been ratified for the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Europe only. If, in accordance with Article 12, the application of the Convention will at any time be extended to the parts of the Kingdom outside Europe, the Secretary-General will be duly notified thereof. In that event the notification will contain such reservation as may be made on behalf of any of these parts of the Kingdom."

In a communication received on 12 August, 1969, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands notified the Secretary-General, pursuant to Article 12 of the Convention, of the extension of the application of the Convention to the Netherlands Antilles, subject to the reservation with regard to Article 1 which was made up by the Netherlands upon ratification of the Convention.

## POLAND

In a communication received on 5 February 1969, the Government of Poland notified the Secretary-General that it wished to express its objection, in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to the first of the two reservations made by the Government of Tunisia in its instrument of accession.

## SWEDEN

The instrument of ratification contains the following reservations:

### *Translation*

*Article 1:* Sweden reserves the right to reject, where the circumstances of the case under consideration appear to make this necessary, any application for legal support aimed at the recovery of maintenance from a person who entered Sweden as a political refugee.

*Article 9:* Where the proceedings are pending in Sweden, the exemptions in the payment of costs and the facilities provided in Article 9, paragraphs 1 and 2, shall be granted only to nationals of or Stateless persons resident in another State Party to this Convention or to any person who would in any case enjoy such advantages under an agreement concluded with the State of which he is a national.

## TUNISIA

The instrument of accession contains the following reservations<sup>(5)</sup>:

### *Translation*

(1) Persons living abroad may only claim the advantages provided for in the Convention when considered non-residents under the exchange regulations in force in Tunisia.

(2) A dispute may only be referred to the International Court of Justice with the agreement of all the parties to the dispute.

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<sup>(5)</sup> See also objection by Poland.

## UNITED KINGDOM

In a communication dated 13 March 1975 the Government of the United Kingdom notified the Secretary-General as follows:

“In accordance with the provisions of Article 2 (1) and (2) of the Convention, the following authorities shall be the designated authorities which shall act in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as Transmitting and Receiving Agencies:

For England and Wales:

The Secretary of State,  
Home Office,  
Whitehall,  
London SW1A 2AP.

For Scotland:

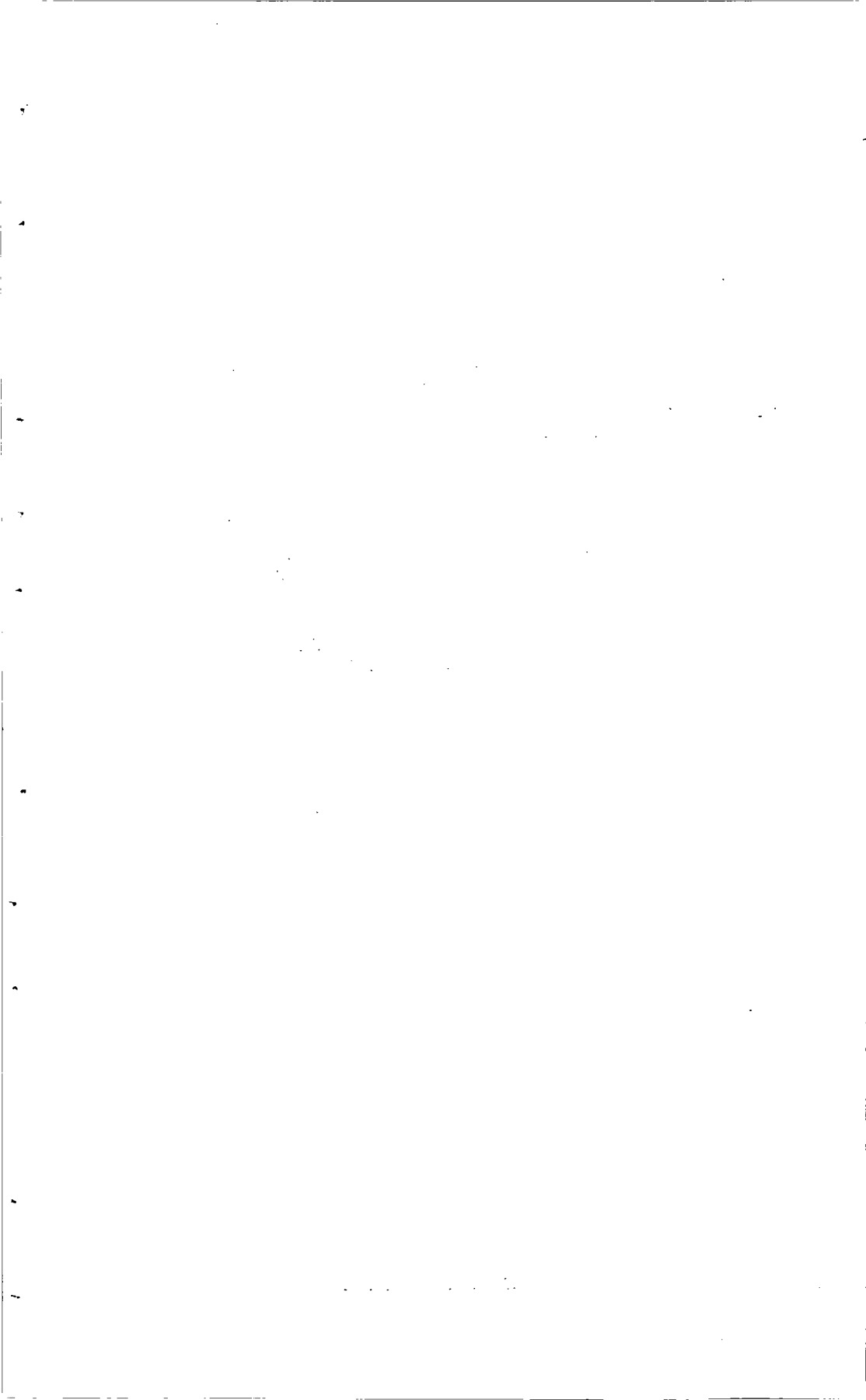
The Secretary of State,  
Scottish Home and Health Department,  
St. Andrew's House,  
Edinburgh EH1 3DE.

For Northern Ireland:

The Secretary of State,  
Dundonald House,  
Upper Newtownards Road,  
Belfast BT4 3SU.

In accordance with Article 12 of the Convention the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hereby gives notice that the provisions of the Convention shall not apply to any of the territories for the international relations of which the United Kingdom is responsible.

In accordance with Article 17 (1) of the Convention, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland objects to reservations (b) and (c) in respect of Articles 12 and 16 of the Convention made by the Argentine Republic on its accession to the Convention on 29 November 1972.”



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