



AIRLINE USERS RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL FORUM

EKM/TC/360/2023

Memorandum to the Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation submitted by Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF) on 24th June 2025

Subject: Urgent Need to Adopt ICAO's Revised Montreal Convention Limits and Align India's Passenger Compensation Rules

Respected Minister ji,

Greetings from Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF)

The Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF) expresses deep sorrow and serious concern over the tragic crash of Air India Flight AI171 on 12 June 2025. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, bound for London Gatwick, crashed shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad. Of the 242 people onboard, 241 passengers and crew lost their lives, along with at least 30 individuals on the ground, including many students in a nearby hostel. Only one passenger survived with minor injuries.

The DGCA, AAIB, NTSB, UK CAA, Boeing, and GE are currently investigating the incident. While no fleet-wide defects have been found so far, the DGCA has introduced enhanced maintenance protocols. Air India and the Tata Group have offered ₹1 crore in compensation per victim, along with an interim payment of ₹25 lakh, and have set up support centers in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Delhi, and London.

This tragedy underscores the pressing need to enhance passenger rights and improve airline accountability, particularly in international travel.

ICAO's Updated Montreal Convention (MC99) Compensation Limits

To reflect global economic changes, ICAO revised the liability limits under the Montreal Convention 1999 (MC99), effective 28 December 2024. These new limits increase compensation for death, injury, delays, baggage loss, and cargo damage:

Claim Type	New Limit (SDR)	Approximate USD Equivalent
Death or serious injury	151,880	USD 202,500
Passenger delays	6,303	USD 8,400
Baggage loss/damage/delay	1,519	USD 2,000
Cargo per kg	26 per kg	USD 35/kg

MC99 ensures fair compensation for passengers, faster and paperless cargo processing for shippers, and clear liability rules for airlines. It holds airlines strictly liable up to defined limits, with the option for passengers or families to claim additional damages if negligence is proven. It also enables modern operations through electronic ticketing and airwaybills.

Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF)

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Request to Align India's Passenger Protection Framework

India's Air Passengers Rights Rules, introduced in 2019, were a positive step, but AURGRF highlights key gaps in consistency. There remain major differences between how international and domestic or low-cost airlines handle compensation. This confuses passengers, weakens accountability, and reduces consumer protection.

As per the India Passenger Charter (February 2019), airlines must pay up to 113,100 SDR for death or serious injury on international flights and ₹20,00,000 per passenger on domestic flights. For baggage loss, delay, or damage, the limit is 1,131 SDR internationally and ₹20,000 domestically. For cargo, the cap is 19 SDR per kg internationally and ₹350 per kg for domestic carriage.

The Montreal Convention 1999 (MC99) establishes a uniform global liability standard for all airlines under ICAO and IATA, applicable to both domestic and international operations. Backed by ICAO Annexes 1–19—especially 6, 9, 13, 17, 18, and 19—it ensures harmonized rules for operations, facilitation, security, dangerous goods, and safety management, strengthening passenger protection and airline accountability.

Aligned with these global standards, many Indian carriers operate the same aircraft interchangeably across domestic and international sectors. Some have also entered into code-sharing or pooling agreements to carry foreign airlines' international passengers on domestic legs within India, both inbound and outbound.

These integrated practices reflect a unified operational framework—sharing aircraft, safety systems, and procedures across all services. This convergence highlights the need for consistent regulatory oversight and uniform safety compliance to uphold passenger rights and ensure airline responsibility.

The Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF) strongly urges the Government of India to ratify the updated Montreal Convention 1999 limits and amend the Air Passengers Rights Rules 2019 to fully align domestic compensation policies with international standards. Harmonizing these frameworks is essential to ensure equal protection for all passengers, whether flying on full-service or low-cost carriers, within India or on international routes.

Considering the above, AURGRF respectfully urges the Government of India to ratify the updated Montreal Convention 1999 limits and amend the Air Passenger Rights Rules, 2019, to harmonize domestic compensation standards with international norms. Such alignment is crucial to eliminate regulatory inconsistencies, strengthen passenger protections, and ensure equitable treatment for all travelers across domestic and international sectors.

The Ahmedabad crash is a painful reminder of what is at stake — AURGRF supports ICAO's revised compensation framework and urges immediate government action to adopt it in India, swiftly, transparently, and with compassion.

Respectfully,
Airline Users' Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF)


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