

No: 101

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and has the honor of reminding the Ministry of the Republic of Serbia's special duty under Article 22(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) to take all appropriate steps to protect the Embassy's premises. The Embassy notes that at 17:11 hours on the evening of February 21, 2008, despite the threat of a small, but growing, group of rioters menacing the Embassy, the Serbian police protecting the Embassy withdrew from the front of the Embassy in an orderly, organized manner and allowed the rioters, whose numbers grew after the police withdrawal, to concentrate their attacks on the Embassy. The attackers soon succeeded in intruding into the Embassy, where they started a large fire in which one of the participants in the attack died. After the rioters had caused their destruction and the Embassy was on fire, the police returned at approximately 19:33 hours. Fire Department personnel eventually arrived at the Embassy at 19:44 hours and extinguished the fire at approximately 21:30 hours.

DIPLOMATIC NOTE

The Embassy requests a formal explanation from the Ministry for this withdrawal of Serbian police protection from the Embassy on the evening of February 21, 2008. The Embassy also formally requests a copy of both the Serbian Police and Fire reports from this event.

The Embassy additionally hereby submits a list of the extensive damages incurred during the attack on the Embassy on the evening of February 21, 2008, including an assessment of damage to the Embassy's windows, façade, buildings, and equipment. The Embassy requests that the Ministry provide compensation to the Embassy for these damages in line with Serbia's obligations under the VCDR as outlined above and the Government of Serbia's public statements accepting responsibility for compensation.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro the assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosure: Catalog of damages sustained by the Embassy during the February 21, 2007, attack and fire

Embassy of the United States of America,
Belgrade, May 8, 2008.

