



VERBAL NOTE

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to note LA/COD/4 of 7 January 2019, has the honour to inform the Secretary-General of the following incidents pursuant to paragraphs 11, 13 and 14 of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/205 of 20 December 2018 entitled "Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives".

On 31 August 2018, a person trespassed on the fenced area of the residence of the Ambassador of Japan in Helsinki. The trespasser grabbed a member of staff by the neck at the door of the residence and caused also damage to some property. The Embassy of Japan and the staff member did not demand punishment or claim compensation due to the offence. The public prosecutor decided not to bring charges against the trespasser because the person was criminally unaccountable.

On 5 October 2019, a person trespassed on the fenced area of the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Helsinki. The suspected person managed to steal the national flag of Iraq and to raise a rainbow flag on the pole. At present, the public prosecutor is assessing the case for the consideration of charges against the trespasser.

On 22 November 2019, a person caused damage to the property of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran by spraying the fence in front of the Embassy chancery. The public prosecutor raised charges against the suspect, and the person has been summoned to appear before the Helsinki District Court charged with damage to property. The Embassy has been asked to present a demand for compensation for the damage at the court hearing.

Between summer 2017 and winter 2020, there were several incidents where the chancery of the Embassy of Israel was a target for different forms of mischief. This mischief includes breaking a glass panel of the front door of the Embassy and kicking the front door, throwing eggs at the door and placing stickers featuring also anti-Semitic motives on the shield of the Embassy. The Embassy also received e-mails with a menacing tone. In addition, a wireless network under the name "death to all Jews" was opened near the Embassy for public use. Currently, the police are investigating the suspected offences, which involve several suspects. The suspected crimes include minor damage to property, hate crime with an anti-Semitic motive and ethnic agitation. Police surveillance near the Embassy has been strengthened by means of electronic surveillance, 24/7 readiness of the police and more effective patrolling near the Embassy.

The Finnish authorities wish to assure the Secretary-General that they take very seriously their duty to take all appropriate action to protect the premises of diplomatic missions against any intrusion or damage, and to prevent any attack on the person of the staff members of the missions. Finland also wishes to emphasize the importance of co-operation on security matters, not only at the international but also at the national level, between the missions and the competent local authorities.

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurance of its highest consideration.

New York, 14 May 2020



H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Office of the Legal Affairs of the United Nations