



United Nations General Assembly | Sixth Committee

Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives (Agenda item 82)

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(check against delivery)

Madam/Mister Chair,

Diplomatic and consular immunities are cornerstones of international law. They protect the means through which States can dialogue, cooperate and peacefully settle disputes. In thanking the Secretary-General for his latest report under this agenda item, my delegation notes with concern the high number of reported incidents. As recognized in the preamble of both 1961 and 1963 Vienna Conventions, the respect for rules and principles governing diplomatic and consular relations is of paramount importance to foster friendly relations among States.

The protections enshrined in the Vienna Conventions extend to a wide range of diplomatic activities. Archives and documents shall be inviolable at all times "wherever they may be". As clarified by the International Court of Justice and stressed in the case law of both national courts and arbitral tribunals applying international law, this inviolability is absolute. Additionally, the Conventions also recognize the inviolability of official correspondence and clearly establish the receiving State's duty to enable free communication of diplomatic and consular missions for all official purposes. These treaties clearly acknowledge that, in order to communicate with their headquarters or other posts, diplomatic and consular missions may employ "all appropriate means". These essential safeguards must be upheld by all branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial, and at all levels of the administration: national, state or regional, and municipal.

Madam/Mister Chair,

Information technology has significantly evolved from the 1960s to our days. Today, communication is no longer dependent on physical support and can circulate through a wide array of new and emerging technological means. Archives and documents, in general, and diplomatic cables, in particular, exist not only on paper, but also on digital platforms. Despite the ever-changing nature of the media through which communication flows, their absolute inviolability under the Vienna Conventions remains fully applicable. To countenance a contrary view would risk jeopardizing sovereign equality and affecting the main purpose of diplomatic and consular relations: to ensure, develop and strengthen friendly relations among States. It is thus clear that diplomatic and consular communications, archives and documents enjoy protection both offline and online.

Madam/Mister Chair,

The Brazilian government has entrusted the role of protecting the premises of the diplomatic missions located in Brasília to a specialized division of the police force, the 5th Battalion of the Military Police of the Federal District - the "Rio Branco" Battalion. The security services provided by the Battalion are grounded in tactical-mobile surveillance. That approach is considered the most appropriate for Brasília, given the city's specific urban characteristics.

Today, the Brazilian Government recognizes 137 accredited Embassies. Except for a few non-resident missions, most of those occupy areas exclusively designated for diplomatic missions in Brasília. The proximity between Embassies allows for simultaneous and equitable policing of the missions established in the city.

The "Rio Branco" Battalion operates proactively and dynamically, utilizing vehicles, foot patrols, covert teams, as well as aerial and nautical surveillance to enhance the efficacy of its operations. Moreover, the Battalion invests in crime prevention programs and community engagement initiatives, promoting educational activities, lectures and community events.

Similar systems of security services and patrolling are conducted in the States that host consulates by specific departments of local law enforcement forces.

Security reinforcement is provided, by request, during specific events such as the holding of elections or national celebrations and in case Brazilian intelligence organs detect heightened risks to the safety of specific missions.

Due to the commitment of the Brazilian Government to safekeeping the premises of the diplomatic and consular missions in its territory, no major incidents in which the safety and integrity of those missions were compromised have been registered in the last year.

Madam/Mister Chair,

Among recent incidents involving diplomatic and consular missions and personnel, breaches of their inviolability by acts of States themselves were of particular concern. Those acts were perpetrated against the wider backdrop of the blatant disregard for international law we currently witness. They contribute to an increasingly hostile and polarized environment and undermine trust among States, which is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security. Abiding by international law in a selective manner is not only illicit, but a risk for the very States that violate its norms: a risk for them to be deprived themselves of the protection they need to conduct their foreign relations in a peaceful and protected manner.

Thank you.