



Note No. 039/2012

The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to UNGA resolution 65/30 of 6 December 2010 entitled “Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives”.

In accordance with the guidelines prepared by the Secretary-General regarding serious violations of the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives with diplomatic status to international intergovernmental organisations, the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations would like to inform the Secretary-General of the following incident.

On 4 February 2012, at approximately 21:30 a number of men forced entry into the Syrian Embassy in Canberra. These demonstrators inflicted damage to the exterior and interior of the Embassy. Three staff members were present at the time of the incident; however none of these individuals were injured.

The incident is believed to have occurred in response to reports that more than 200 people were killed by Syrian forces in the city of Homs. The incident coincided with a number of other violent demonstrations at embassies in Europe and the Middle East.

Following this incident, a crime scene was established by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and additional measures were implemented for the protection of the Chargé d’Affaires. The AFP is liaising with other agencies to undertake a thorough investigation of the incident. The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations will report to the Secretary-General the final outcome of any proceedings brought against the offenders.

Following the incident, on 5 February 2012 the then Foreign Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, released the following statement regarding the incident:

*The Government... expresses its deep concern at the disturbance of the Syrian Embassy last night. The Government is fully mindful of its obligations under the Vienna Convention and the proper protection of diplomatic consular personnel and property. The Australian Federal Police is investigating this incident. Such behaviour has no place in Australia.*

No other events seriously violated the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions in Australia.

The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity