

Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Report on the attack on the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Islamic Republic of Azerbaijan

On 27 January 2023, at around 8:32am local time, an armed attack was committed against the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tehran.

The attack was thoroughly recorded by the Embassy's surveillance cameras.¹

On the day of the attack, the attacker drove past the Embassy twice with his car, at 8:05am and 8:24am, to choose a suitable location for the attack.

At 8:22am, immediately before the attack, the attacker deliberately crashed at high speed into the vehicle belonging to the diplomatic mission of Azerbaijan parked in front of the Embassy building. Making advantage of the confusion, the attacker took an Iranian police officer posted at the entrance and entered the Embassy while opening fire.

During the next 4 minutes, inside the Embassy until 8:36am, the attacker fired numerous shots at the Embassy staff, including the head of the Embassy's security service, Orkhan Asgari, who was seriously injured from a gunshot wound and another staff member, Mahir Imanov, was seriously injured in his right arm and left leg. Another staff member, Vahid Taghiev, engaged with the attacker. Although the attacker fired at V. Taghiev twice with the rifle and hit him in the shoulder and chin, he managed to remove the magazine from the automatic rifle and push him out of the Embassy building.

At 8:34am, 2 minutes after the attacker entered the Embassy, another attacker arrived at the Embassy, but after a brief conversation with the diplomatic security officer posted at the entrance, he returned to the area.

Despite the attacker's forceful entry into the Embassy, sustained gunshots came from the Embassy, and V. Taghiev's calls for help to neutralise the attacker. The Iranian police officer posted at the entrance did nothing to intervene in the incident and abandoned his post and left the area.

¹ The full recorded CCTV footage of the incident with English subtitles is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...>

After the attacker was pushed out of the Embassy building for the first time, he took a spare magazine from his jacket, reloaded his rifle, gestured twice to shoot continuously at the Embassy entrance, as well as at the windows of the Embassy building, where the family members of the diplomat were gathered. He fired the Embassy vehicle twice in order to burn it with a combustion.

Breaking the door of the Embassy, with a heavy mallet, he entered his car, the attacker managed to enter the Embassy for the second time at 8:45am with the intent to kill diplomats and their family members. V. Taghiyev again forced the attacker to leave the building.

In the street, the attacker, taking advantage of the police still not intervening in the incident, tried to set ablaze the Embassy vehicles parked in front of the Embassy building with a Molotov cocktail that he retrieved from his vehicle. Only at 8:49am, as the attacker accidentally set himself on fire, the police intervened, treating the attacker like a criminal, helping him to extinguish the flames and wandering in the area for the Embassy diplomats and verbally threatening to kill them. He freely approached the market, where he used to break down the Embassy building's door, retrieved his personal items and returned to his car.

Then the attacker began to break the Embassy window to arrest the attacker, come to the scene and began to gather evidence, including the mallet. The police did not intervene.

Only at around 8:45am, following aggressive acts of the attacker against the Embassy staff and premises for more than 20 minutes, the police arrived on the scene. An unknown person with a mask on his face took some items from the attacker's car and left the area.

The facts that the attacker had a "Colt" type pistol, a Molotov cocktail, a heavy mallet and other means to the scene, as well as the fact that the police did not intervene in the incident, are presumed to be the main reasons for the attack.

The Republic of Azerbaijan demanded that the authorities of Iran conduct a proper investigation of the incident. The investigation is ongoing.