

Statement by Finland  
on behalf of the Nordic countries

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

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(check against delivery)

Mr/Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries:

Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland. This item on Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives was originally included in the agenda of the General Assembly on the initiative of the Nordic countries. We continue to pay particular attention to this topic.

It is a matter of great concern for us that diplomatic agents and premises keep falling victims of serious violations in the receiving States despite the general recognition of the special duty to protect them.

Especially in these exceptional circumstances after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, co-operation between States is pivotal and diplomatic and consular missions and representatives form the cornerstone of that co-operation

Therefore, the Nordic countries find it important to point out that, while understanding the grave health concerns in many countries, the rules of diplomatic and consular law are applicable even in exceptional circumstances. Any measures taken by the receiving States to limit the spread of COVID-19 must be without prejudice to the privileges and immunities of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. It is essential to respect the inviolability of missions and persons enjoying privileges and immunities under international law.

Mr/Madam Chair,

We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/75/168, as well as for his efforts in assisting the Member States to respond to the reporting request contained in paragraph 11 of resolution 73/205 which was adopted two years ago. We would also like to extend our thanks to the States that have provided information pursuant to this resolution. We were pleased to note that with regard to many incidents, the report includes both a summary on the protection, security and safety failures encountered by the sending States as well as a summary on the follow-up measures taken by the receiving States.

The report also shows that there are some new States Parties to the international legal instruments relevant in this field. We welcome these new ratifications and accessions and continue to appeal to all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the instruments relevant to the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. Full implementation of such instruments by all States Parties is also of great significance.

Universally recognized rules and principles of international law, as reflected in the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations, place upon the receiving States a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the diplomatic and consular premises, to prevent any attacks on the diplomatic and consular representatives and to accord full facilities for the performance of

the functions of the diplomatic missions and the consular posts. We urge States to honour their obligations under international law to provide protection to foreign missions, and to do their utmost to prevent such attacks from taking place on their territory. Where attacks have occurred, they have to be fully investigated and prosecuted. States are also encouraged to engage in a dialogue with the diplomatic missions in their territory with a view to finding the most effective ways in ensuring the full protection of diplomatic premises and representatives.

Mr/Madam Chair,

Despite all the efforts undertaken, the Secretary-General's report again documents serious violations that have taken place and we have also learnt about other attacks against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. We express our regrets at injuries suffered in such attacks and condemn all acts of violence in the strongest terms. The Nordic countries wish to emphasize that such violations and attacks can never be justified and must not go unpunished.

Thank you, Mr/Madam Chair