

Circular Note

Under international law, the receiving State is under a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of diplomatic missions and diplomatic agents on its territory. The authorities of the receiving State are thus responsible for the external security and protection of the embassies on its territory. The Government of Norway attaches great importance to the security and the protection of foreign missions and diplomats in Norway.

Several bodies cooperate on embassy security in Norway. Oslo Police District has the main responsibility for the embassies' security, and is the embassies' day-to-day contact point for security questions. The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) is responsible for preventing terrorist acts and other politically motivated violence in Norway. The embassies' security situation is the subject of regular consideration by Oslo Police District and PST. If it is decided that particular police protection measures are to be implemented for an embassy, an ambassador, or for other specified personnel, these are carried out by Oslo Police District

The Missions in Oslo have previously been informed about relevant contact points in Oslo Police District for security related matters.

Based on media reports of additional security measures taken by a foreign mission, and in response to questions raised in this context by members of the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament), the Minister of Justice referred in a statement to the Storting on 17 November 2010 to the right embassies in Norway have to institute their own security measures for their premises, including the residence of the Head of Mission. In accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and customary international law, it is, at the same time, the duty of all persons enjoying privileges and immunities referred to in the Convention to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State. Security measures implemented by diplomatic missions must therefore comply with Norwegian law. The exercise of public authority by a foreign State on Norwegian territory without the permission of Norway is prohibited.

As the Minister of Justice stated in the Storting, the Norwegian authorities are responsible for the external protection of embassies in Norway. He also made it clear that if an embassy wishes to implement security measures that may extend beyond the premises of the mission and the residence of the Head of Mission, this has to be formally cleared with the Norwegian authorities through diplomatic channels.

Should an Embassy desire further security measures in terms of external protection, a request to this effect must therefore be formally notified to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Diplomatic Section.

Oslo, 14 January 2011