

Man Arrested for Shooting at Turkish Embassy in Moscow

August 18, 2014



Police have detained a man who opened fire on the Turkish Embassy in central Moscow on Monday morning, ITAR-Tass reported.

The man, who fired two shots from a double-barreled hunting rifle at an embassy sign depicting the Turkish flag, was immediately detained by police officers guarding the embassy. No one was harmed in the incident, according to ITAR-Tass.

Moskovsky Komsomolets identified the shooter as a 43-year-old Armenian businessman. The police had not commented on the identity of the shooter by the time of publication.

While the shooter's motives remain unclear, the strained relations between Turkey and Armenia over the recent exacerbation of tensions in Nagorno-Karabakh — a region that lies within Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders but is populated by a large majority of Armenians — circulated Monday in the Russian press as a potential motive for the act. Armenia lent support to ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh when they fought a war of rebellion against Azerbaijan's rule from the late '80s to early '90s.

Rallies have also previously been held at and near Turkish embassies and consulates in Russia by representatives of the country's extensive Armenian diaspora calling for Turkey to recognize as genocide the massacre of Armenians by Ottoman authorities in 1915 in what is modern-day Turkey.

ITAR-Tass reported that police have opened a hooliganism case against the man, who currently remains in police custody. If charged and convicted, he faces up to five years in prison under Russian law.

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