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Firebombs Thrown at Russian Embassy in Minsk

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An official on Tuesday inspecting a car damaged by a fire bomb lodged at the Russian Embassy in Minsk. **Sergei Grits**

MINSK — An unknown assailant threw two firebombs at the Russian Embassy in Minsk late Monday, in an attack that hurt nobody but destroyed an embassy car, a Belarussian Emergency Situations Ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

The spokesman, Vitaly Novitsky, said the motive for the attack and the identity of the perpetrator were unknown.

Belarussian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Savinykh condemned the attack as a hooligan stunt aimed at hurting Belarussian-Russian relations, the Belapan news agency reported.

The embassy has asked the Belarussian Foreign Ministry for help investigating what is believed to be the first such attack.

In Moscow, police said security near the Belarussian Embassy had been increased as a result of the attack, Interfax reported.

Relations between traditional allies Russia and Belarus have soured over recent months as Minsk struggles to reduce its dependence on Moscow.

In April, Minsk gave refuge to former Kyrgyz leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who was criticized by Moscow, and in June, Belarus threatened to cut Russian gas transit to Europe in a pricing dispute.

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