

# U.S. Timed 'Emotionally Deaf' Diplomat Expulsions to Kemerovo Tragedy, Says Russian Ambassador

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Anatoly Antonov **United States Mission Geneva** / Flickr (CC BY-ND 2.0)

Russia's ambassador to the U.S. has criticized Washington's decision to expel Russian diplomats in the wake of a tragic fire that took the lives of 60 people in a Siberian shopping mall.

Dozens of people were killed after a fire that started on Sunday swept through a shopping mall in the Siberian city of Kemerovo. On Monday afternoon, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the expulsion of 60 Russian diplomats from the country in a coordinated move with 14 EU member states.

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“On this grim day of tragedy in Kemerovo we have seen official Washington stay emotionally deaf, indifferent and inconsiderate,” Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Antonov said on Tuesday.

Notably, the White House [opened](#) its Monday briefing with words of sympathy to the families of the Kemerovo fire victims before announcing the closure of Russia’s consulate in Seattle and the diplomats’ expulsions over the poisoning of ex-double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia on March 4.

“They have simply decided to make it even more painful. Well, gloat all you want,” Antonov said.

“We shall not be provoked into an emotional outburst. But there will be a response,” the Russian diplomat warned.

*An earlier version of this article stated that 64 people died in the fire, according to Russian authorities. The official death toll was later revised to 60, the Investigative Committee [said](#) in a statement.*

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