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Protesters Throw Smoke Grenades at Russian Embassy in Kiev, Burn Diplomatic Car

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EPA / TASS

Ukrainian protesters gathered outside the Russian Embassy in Kiev on Sunday after a naval escalation between the two countries, pelting smoke bombs toward the building and reportedly setting one diplomatic car on fire.

Tensions flared after Russia fired on and seized three Ukrainian naval ships on Sunday as they attempted to pass through the narrow Kerch Strait into the Sea of Azov, which lies between Russia and Ukraine. Earlier this year, Russia finished construction of a massive road bridge across the strait that links its southern regions to the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow annexed in 2014.

Related article: Russia Reopens Kerch Strait to Shipping After Naval Clash With Ukraine

“We gathered here today to express our protest against Russians, over their actions today and over the shooting of our military,” protester Oleksiy Ryabov was cited as saying by Reuters at a rally outside the Russian Embassy in Kiev on Sunday night. “We should have severed all diplomatic relations with this country a long time ago,” he added.

An estimated 300 protesters gathered outside the embassy to protest the incident, local media reported. Videos showed local law enforcement authorities blocking a group of participants from setting a stack of tires on fire outside the building.

Paper boats were seen arrayed on the embassy gates as protesters chanted “peace to Donbass, death to the Kremlin, death to Russia” in Ukrainian.

Some of the masked men threw flares in the direction of the embassy.

A sedan with Russian diplomatic license plates parked 1 kilometer from the embassy was set on fire, according to the Ukrainskaya Pravda news outlet.

Ukrainian television reported that tires were also burned outside the Russian Consulate in Lviv.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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