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Attention of

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Multi-National Brigade (East)  
Camp Bondsteel  
APO AE 09340



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### Attack on Soldiers in Ferizaj/Urosevac

**Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo**— A soldier with the Greek 525<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion received second degree burns to his face and neck during a March 17 attack on the unit's observation post at the Serbian Church of Saint Uros in Ferizaj/Urosevac by a crowd of approximately 500 rioters. One U.S. Soldier and 16 other Greek soldiers received minor injuries from items the crowd was throwing.

The crowd arrived at the observation post at approximately 5:30 p.m. and threw a grenade at the soldiers of the observation post. The soldiers reported the incident and Greek Army Maj. Kyriakos Kondogiannis, commander of the battalion, and U.S. Army 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Milan D. George of the 649<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion and officer in charge of the Analysis and Collection Team at Camp Rigas Fereos, responded to investigate the call.

Shortly after the two officers arrived, the crowd began attacking the observation post with rocks and bricks, injuring George in the process, forcing the soldiers to evacuate him to the church.

Then the crowd began attacking the Greek soldiers with grenades and improvised incendiary devices. Kondogiannis then ordered half of the soldiers into the church while the other half remained outside inside the unit's armored vehicles and awaited the Greek Army's Quick Reaction Force that had been called to assist the soldiers.

The crowd began setting fire to the first of three unoccupied military vehicles while the soldiers waited for the QRF. Then the rioters attempted to enter the church and stopped when they were confronted by the soldiers inside, but continued to attack the church with grenades and incendiary devices.

The attack continued after Kondogiannis ordered the soldiers to fire their weapons in the air in an attempt to disperse the crowd, which had grown to approximately 1,000 to 3,000 people, and was still underway when the QRF arrived in armored vehicles to evacuate the soldiers at approximately 10 p.m. The rioters began throwing incendiary devices at the QRF vehicles and were not dispelled until U.S. helicopters began dropping tear gas on the crowd, dispersing them enough for the evacuation to take place. During the evacuation, rioters fired at the soldiers and their vehicles.

Once the evacuation was complete U.S. military police and members of the Kosovo Police Service arrived to secure the church site. The crowd, reduced to about 150 people, did not continue the attack.

By the end of the night an estimated 200 incendiary devices, 15 grenades, and numerous rocks were thrown at the soldiers and the church during the attack, resulting in the destruction of three military vehicles and damage to two others.

While there was a great deal of damage and at least one serious injury, George said it could have been even worse.

“The requirements were met for the use of deadly force, however a conscientious decision was made not to use such force,” he said.

Kondogiannis said the actions of the rioters was a great disappointment.

“ I would like very much to see a peaceful Ferizaj,” he said. “We want to keep the peace and not fight against the citizens of Kosovo.”

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