



Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

Subject: Demonstration inside the Palais des Nations

As you know, at 4.30 a.m. on 16 February 1999, Kurdish demonstrators forced their way into the Palais, causing some damage to property. They assembled in Conference Room XVII, in the New (E) Building.

The Security and Safety Section managed to contain the demonstrators within the conference room and, with police support, isolated the sector and closed off all access in order, in particular, to ensure people's safety.

In spite of the serious disruption caused by this occupation, especially to UNCTAD, services in the Old Building continued to function normally. A few vital services housed in the New Building were able to be moved to sectors of the Palais that remained usable, thus diminishing the disturbance to operations in various parts of the New Building.

Throughout the crisis I monitored the situation very closely and kept the Coordinating Council informed of developments and of the arrangements made to ensure that delegates and staff were completely safe.

After a sit-in of some 36 hours, the demonstrators called off their occupation and left the Palais at 3.30 p.m. on 17 February.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all staff for the professionalism they showed and for the various arrangements made to enable the Palais to continue operating reasonably well in exceptional circumstances.

The United Nations Office at Geneva is in constant contact with the police authorities and will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

Vladimir Petrovsky  
Director-General

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