

Five hurt, 42 arrested at NATO rally

by UPI

BELGRADE, Serbia -- Five people were injured in Belgrade, Serbia, during rallies marking the 10th anniversary of NATO air raids on the former Yugoslavia, police said.

Two protesters and three police officers were injured during a clash between about 150 demonstrators and police Tuesday, Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

Police arrested 24 people after a television crew was attacked and a fast-food restaurant was vandalized, the Russian state news agency said.

NATO's 78-day bombing campaign began March 24, 1999. RIA Novosti said the air raids paved the way for the eventual secession of Kosovo, which at the time was a Serbian province with a majority ethnic Albanian population. Kosovo has been recognized formally as a sovereign state by more than 50 countries, including the United States and most European Union members since it unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia in February 2008.

"The attack on our country was an illegal act," Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic said Tuesday at one of the commemorations. "The NATO bombing neither solved problems nor provided peace, stability and the rule of law in Kosovo-Metohija."

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