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LETTER DATED 21 FEBRUARY 1984 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Following my letter dated 18 February 1984, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to you by Mr. Tarek Aziz, Deputy Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Riyadh AL-QAYSI  
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq  
addressed to the Secretary-General

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the deep concern recently expressed by you over the fact that civilians, towns and villages have been exposed to shelling because of the continuing war waged by Iran against Iraq. I also have the honour to inform you that, on 18 February 1984, the Republic of Iraq declared, through its military spokesman, its full willingness to avoid any shelling of towns, villages or civilians, provided that such a commitment is subject to effective international supervision. This official statement by my Government was in response to a statement by the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Army (issued five days after the declaration by Iraq that it would desist from shelling targets in certain Iranian towns) to the effect that Iran would desist from shelling Iraqi towns and villages.

I take this opportunity to make the point that experience has shown that Iran's statements that it would refrain from shelling towns, villages and civilians cannot be relied upon. Iranian officials have continued to deny that their forces have shelled our peaceful border towns and villages, despite the fact that such shelling has been an almost daily occurrence since the outbreak of fighting. Iranian leaders have continued to deny these facts, even after they were documented in the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission that visited both countries in June 1983.

I also wish to state that the Iranian régime - following our declaration on 14 February 1984 that we would desist, for one week, from shelling selected targets in certain Iranian towns, to which we strictly adhered - seized the opportunity to strike civilian targets in Basra, Mindli, Khanqin, Ali-Algharbi, Sayyed-Sadiq, Yaaquba and other places, for five whole days. The Iranian régime untruthfully claimed that our forces had hit civilian targets inside Iran during that period. This proves that Iran's statements and claims cannot be relied upon as a guarantee that towns, villages and civilians in Iraq will not be shelled.

The designation of civilian targets can be a matter of dispute within the context of a war persistently being waged by Iran against our country, in violation of Security Council resolutions calling for an end to the war and a settlement on the basis of negotiations.

In order to avoid resumed shelling of towns, villages and civilians, to avoid misunderstandings concerning such a delicate question, and to verify any future transgressions, it is essential, in our view, to develop effective mechanisms to ensure international supervision and enable the international community to identify contradictory statements and guarantee that towns, villages and civilians in both countries would not be hit.

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It is our belief that the United Nations is the body which can develop such mechanisms; otherwise, Iran would be able to continue its policy of shelling towns, villages and civilians inside Iraq, only to deny it and claim falsely that it is Iraq that is carrying out such a policy.

If Iran were really serious about honouring its commitment to desist from shelling Iraqi towns and villages, why will it not agree to mechanisms under international supervision to verify that the commitment is honoured in the field?

We therefore sincerely ask you to take immediate action to develop such mechanisms as soon as possible under the supervision either of the United Nations, which we would prefer, or of any other mutually acceptable body.

(Signed) Tarek AZIZ  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Iraq

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