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LETTER DATED 10 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government and in reference to my letter dated 21 December 1987 on the tragic fate of Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran, I have the honour to inform you that, on 16 December 1987, the news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran reported that the Iranian authorities had released 450 Iraqi prisoners of war, thus bringing the number of Iraqi prisoners freed since the beginning of the war to 3,500, and that those prisoners had sought political asylum in Iran and would fight against Iraq, their country.

The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already addressed various international bodies, including the United Nations, in details concerning the grim fate that awaits Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran, pointing out that the Iranian régime has from the outset dealt with them in a political light in conformity with its expansionist designs on Iraq. It has not hesitated to order the massacre of prisoners who refused to bow to its will, or to put Iranian elements formerly resident in Iraq among the remainder in order to compel them, through intimidation and every kind of torture and psychological pressure, to turn against their country. The former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Alexander Hay, in a statement on 23 November 1984, was moved to say that Iran was leaving Iraqi prisoners of war only two options - treason or death.

During their visit to Iraq in February, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew the attention of Mr. André Pasquier, the Director of Operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. Michel Amiquet, the general representative of the Committee for the Middle East and North Africa, to the mental and physical pressure and brain-washing employed by the Iranian authorities to force Iraqi prisoners to abandon their beliefs and fight in the ranks of the Iranian army against their country, Iraq, in flagrant violation of the third 1949 Geneva Convention which prohibits prisoners of war from being forced to participate in combat against their country.

While we draw your attention to these practices, which patently violate the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, we also strenuously condemn the barbarous treatment which the Iranian régime persists in

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meting out to Iraqi prisoners of war in order to make them turn against their country, Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ismat KITTANI  
Permanent Representative

