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LETTER DATED 14 MARCH 1988 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO  
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the letter of His Excellency  
Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of  
Iran, dated 14 March 1988.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter and its annex were circulated as  
a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad Ja'afar MAHALLATI  
Director-General of International  
Affairs, Acting Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the Minister for Foreign  
Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the  
Secretary-General

The international community has witnessed yet another episode of the total disregard of the war mongering and aggressor régime of Iraq for norms of international law governing the conduct of hostilities. Escalating and widening the scope of its war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iraqi régime resumed its attacks against neutral shipping in the Persian Gulf last week and once again resorted to the use of chemical weapons against civilians on 11 March 1988 in the vicinity of Bakhtaran. Furthermore, last night - 13 March 1988 - the Iraqi régime resumed its missile attacks against non-military and residential quarters in Tehran, massacring scores of innocent civilians in cold blood. The details of these attacks have been brought to your attention by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New York.

As you are well aware, the Islamic Republic of Iran, committed to the observance of international humanitarian principles, has never initiated, resumed or continued the war of the cities. Even after intense and continued Iraqi attacks against civilian areas, the Islamic Republic of Iran has reluctantly resorted to limited preventive and retaliatory measures in exercise of its inherent right of self-defence not by targeting purely civilian areas but by attacking military, industrial and economic centres in Iraq. In line with the universally recognized rules of warfare, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been guided by its commitment that the response to repeated acts of aggression and lawlessness of the Iraqi régime must be delivered in the battlefields by Muslim combatants.

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again reminds the United Nations of its grave responsibility in countering and suppressing acts of aggression, an obligation which is imperative for the maintenance of international peace and security. We reiterate that the silence and indifference of the United Nations in the face of the savage crimes of the Iraqi régime remains unjustifiable not only for the Iranian people but also for the international public opinion.

The passive and aloof reaction of the United Nations has caused the continuation and escalation of Iraqi war crimes and has encouraged Iraq to continue with impunity its criminal policy of use of chemical weapons, attacks against merchant shipping and savage massacre of the civilians in cities and other non-military quarters. This trend of Iraqi war crimes and United Nations inaction indeed threatens regional and international peace and security.

It is evident that, under those circumstances, the aggressor régime of Iraq and its super-Power supporters will have to bear full responsibility for all consequences of the breach of peace and stability in the region and in the world. Moreover, those international bodies who have maintained an unjustifiable silence and indifference in the face of war crimes of such magnitude will have to share responsibility for the grave consequences of Iraqi acts of lawlessness.

It is necessary to remind that until and unless pertinent international authorities adopt effective and immediate measures to halt and prevent the inhuman Iraqi policies, the Islamic Republic of Iran will have no alternative but to resort forcefully to appropriate and effective retaliatory measures in self-defence.

(Signed) Ali Akbar VELAYATI  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
The Islamic Republic of Iran

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