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LETTER DATED 16 MARCH 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 16 March 1988 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister 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 document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ismat KITTANI
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
for Foreign Affairs addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, further to my letter to you of 5 March 1988, to state that our past conjectures appear to have been confirmed, namely, that Iran has been preceding every act of aggression against the national territory of Iraq with a blizzard of criminal and misleading actions and practices which are designed to blur the picture and to give a false impression to the international community. On this occasion, it has again done exactly that, igniting the war against civilians in spite of Iraq's self-restraint and long-suffering patience.

Although Iraq unilaterally declared that it would cease its bombardment on 11 March 1988, Iran resumed its bombardment of a number of Iraqi cities, including the border town of Halabjah and its surrounds.

The bombardment caused heavy casualties among civilians, including women, old people and children.

I wish to inform you that, following the subjection of the town of Halabjah and its surrounds to concentrated artillery bombardment over the course of the past few days, Iran's forces have now proceeded to enter the town and its surrounds causing widespread destruction.

In the circumstances, Iraq has no alternative but to exercise its legitimate right to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity with all the measures and means enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, with a view to deterring the Iranian aggression. It is the Iranian régime which must bear full responsibility for this dangerous escalation and for all the casualties and material losses which are to be inflicted on our country, as well as those which will be inflicted on Iran as a consequence of such action.

We have stated many times in the past - particularly since the adoption of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which has binding force - that the Council must draw the correct conclusions from the Iranian régime's rejection of that resolution and impose mandatory sanctions on the régime which persists in war, destruction and expansion. It is the Security Council's hesitation in this regard - as well as the flawed positions of some of its members - that has provided Iran with the opportunity to evade the resolution and to continue its war of aggression, which today has resulted in the occupation of another Iraqi town.

In the light of this development, it is essential that the Security Council should assume its full responsibilities by curbing Iran's evil expansionist ambitions and concentrating on the essence of the problem, which is Iran's insistence on continuing the war and its aggression.

I request you to circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Iraq

