



Security Council

Distr.  
GENERAL

S/1996/807  
30 September 1996  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

---

LETTER DATED 29 SEPTEMBER 1996 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 inform you of the following:

1. At 1300 hours on 18 September 1996, when the Iraqi tugboat Ninawa was anchored between Mina al-Bakr and Mina al-Amiq within Iraqi territorial waters, a United States helicopter hovered over it and ordered the captain to assemble the crew at the stern and to await the arrival of the inspection authorities. At 1400 hours, two inflatable rafts approached. One of them, which had been launched from a United States frigate and was flying the American flag, had on board 15 servicemen armed with pistols. The other, flying the British flag, had been launched from a United Kingdom frigate and carried seven men. Then, seven of the Americans and four of the British boarded the tug and began inspecting it in a thoroughgoing and provocative manner. They broke open all the locks on the cabins, storage cabinets and crew's lockers and seized the ship's papers, the crew's identity and citizenship documents and other papers concerning the ship's contents, destination, construction and specifications and sent them to the United States frigate, where they were photocopied. At 1600 hours the men disembarked from the tugboat and returned to their respective ships.

2. At 2300 hours on 19 September 1996, when the Iraqi tugboat Sab'Nisan was located between Mina al-Bakr and Mina al-Amiq within Iraqi territorial waters, a United Kingdom frigate sent an order to the captain to proceed to a point six miles to the east of Mina al-Bakr and to anchor there. At 0630 hours on 20 September the frigate lowered an inflatable raft carrying 10 men armed with pistols and weapon detectors. The raft then returned to the frigate and transported another six men, bringing the total to 16, including several officers. They ordered the crew at gunpoint to assemble at the stern of the vessel and proceeded to inspect the entire contents of the tugboat, demanding the crew's identity documents, the certificate of registry and the logbook. Acting in a provocative manner, they forced open the locks on the cabin doors, scattered the crew's effects and photocopied all the ship's papers and the documents of the crew. After one of the officers of the boarding party had written a note concerning the inspection, in the ship's log, the tug was released, the detention and inspection of the vessel having continued until 0730 hours on 20 September.

I request that you fulfil your responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations vis-à-vis the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom in order to bring about the cessation and non-repetition of these unwarranted hostile and provocative acts carried out by their warships and military aircraft against Iraqi civilian shipping within Iraqi territorial waters. Such acts constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. I also reaffirm the right of the Republic of Iraq, as established by law and pursuant to the principle of international liability, to receive compensation for the harm it has suffered and the damage caused to its property in the course of these actions.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

-----