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LETTER DATED 11 MAY 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ICELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Acting under instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring the following to your attention.

British warships and tugboats continue to assist British trawlers in their violation of Icelandic fishery jurisdiction and, in doing so, grossly abuse international rules of navigation. The number of British naval ships and other support vessels deployed within the fisheries jurisdiction of Iceland has also been increased, and their actions have become more aggressive than ever before. On 6 May 1976, the British Government announced its decision to send two more frigates and a tugboat to reinforce the Royal Navy's protection of illegal fishing by British trawlers around Iceland. Immediately following this announcement, the British frigates and tugboats operating within the Icelandic fishery limits off the east coast of Iceland, renewed their attempts to ram and sink the Icelandic Coast Guard vessels. This nefarious and organized practice of the British warships and tugboats was preceded by a message received by the Icelandic Coast Guard vessel Baldur from the British frigate Mermaid F-764, which read as follows: "We in the frigates are no longer restricted by our authorities in ridding off Icelandic Coast Guard vessels which attempt to harass British trawlers. Do you understand?"

After continued and repeated but unsuccessful attempts by the British warships and tugboats, the Icelandic Coast Guard vessel Odinn was rammed three times, the Coast Guard vessel Tyr was rammed twice and the other Coast Guard vessel Baldur once, all in one and the same day, in what seemed to be a well-organized and co-ordinated attack on the part of the British warships and their support vessels.

The Coast Guard vessel Odinn was rammed no less than three times by the British frigate Gurkha F-122, while at least 21 unsuccessful attempts to ram and sink the Coast Guard vessel took place between 2130-2300 hours on 6 May.

The Coast Guard vessel Tyr was rammed by the frigate Falmouth F-113 and the frigate Galathea F-18; at the same time, the tugboat Lloydsman made several similar attempts. During this action, the frigate Galathea F-18 caused the Coast Guard vessel Tyr to list heavily to starboard, so that the ship's portside propeller was lifted out of the water, with the result that as it hit the side

of the oncoming frigate all the blades of the propeller were ripped off. This is but one example of the ferocity of this attack by the British warships.

The Coast Guard vessel Baldur was rammed by the frigate Mermaid F-76. Several unsuccessful attempts were also made at ramming this vessel by the British frigate Galathea F-18 and the British tugboat Statesman.

A number of rammings took place when the Icelandic Coast Guard vessels were making no attempt whatsoever to prevent the British trawlers from their illegal fishing and, in fact, were not in the immediate vicinity of the British trawler fleet.

This outrageous practice of the British warships and their accompanying tugboats in attacking the Icelandic Coast Guard vessels places the lives of their crews in the gravest danger and has caused serious damages to the Coast Guard vessels that have been the object of these attacks whilst engaged in their lawful duties.

Since the incidents reported above took place on 6 May 1976 the British frigates have continued to make attempts to attack Icelandic Coast Guard vessels. This includes four attempts made on 10 May 1976 by the British frigate Salesbury F-32, to ram the Icelandic Coast Guard vessel Ver. Furthermore, four British support vessels made concerted attempts to ram the Coast Guard vessel Baldur on the fishing grounds off the south-east coast of Iceland.

The Icelandic Government has, of course, protested in the strongest possible terms at these serious attacks.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ingvu INGVARSSON
Permanent Representative
of Iceland to the United Nations
