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LETTER DATED 31 MAY 1982 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED
NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, further to my letter of 28 May 1982 concerning the British hospital ship SS Uganda (S/15137), to communicate the text of a statement issued by the British Ministry of Defence on Sunday, 30 May 1982 as follows:

The Argentine Government has warned that if the SS Uganda and other hospital ships "have not retreated by 00.00 hours on 29 May to a distance which leaves no doubt as to their activity they will cease to be regarded as hospital ships and will be treated as hostile."

This follows Friday's suggestion that the SS Uganda was impeding the movements of combatants and violating Article 30 of the Second Geneva Convention of 1949. They have further suggested on 29 May that the Ship is being used for military purposes.

The British Government wish to make it quite clear that these allegations are completely unfounded. It has already provided the Argentine authorities with full details of the movements and activities of the SS Uganda up to now and these are in full accordance with the Second Geneva Convention of 1949.

We have now provided detailed information on the activities of British hospital ships for the foreseeable future in the areas concerned. Neither the SS Uganda nor any other British hospital ship is being used for any military purpose whatsoever. Their only intention is to aid the evacuation and treatment of casualties, a great many of whom are Argentine.

The British Government reserves the right to use hospital ships when and where appropriate in order to provide assistance to the wounded - British or

Argentine. The SS Uganda is a clearly marked hospital ship and is operating, and will continue to operate, in accordance with the Second Geneva Convention. It is providing humanitarian assistance to casualties of both sides. Any military action committed by the Argentine authorities against this or any other similar vessel will be a flagrant breach of the Second Geneva Convention and shall be the full responsibility of the Argentine Government.

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

(Signed) A. D. PARSONS
