



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 31 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to my letter dated 23 December 2020 (S/2020/1284), I write to draw your attention to the following violation by Bahraini military launches of Qatari territorial waters:

On Wednesday, 25 November 2020, at 1200 hours Qatar time, two Royal Bahrain Naval Force military patrol launches – each of them a 32-foot launch with two 250-hp motors – were observed at coordinates N 26°22'22", E 51°00'13", some 1.6 miles inside western Qatari territorial waters, heading south. Qatari naval patrol boats were dispatched to the site. It transpired that there were between three and five Bahraini army soldiers of various ranks aboard each of the Bahraini launches. The Bahraini launches, which were present in Qatari territorial waters illegally and without permission, were stopped and questioned as to why they were on the Qatari side of the boundary. The crew members initially stated that they had taken refuge in the area because of bad weather conditions. They subsequently changed their story and claimed that the Global Positioning System device on one of the launches had not been working and the device of the other launch had subsequently malfunctioned due to poor weather conditions, so they didn't know their true heading.

The crew members of the two Bahraini launches verbally attacked the Qatari naval patrols while displaying their weapons and taking photographs. The Qatari authorities notified the Bahraini Coast Guard operations room by telephone of this unlawful and unacceptable behaviour.

At 1328 hours, six Bahraini Coast Guard patrol boats were observed moving towards the site where the incident had been reported. The relevant Qatari authorities contacted the Bahraini Coast Guard by telephone hotline to inform them that they needed to issue an immediate order to the six patrol boats and the two launches to move away from the site back to their side of the boundary. The Bahraini Coast Guard acknowledged receipt of the communication, and after five minutes, the boats headed in the direction of the boundary. At 1343 hours, the two Bahraini launches being detained by the Qatari naval patrol boats were released and escorted to the nearest point on the Qatari maritime boundary. The Bahraini side was notified. By 1400 hours, all Bahraini targets were confirmed to have left Qatari territory.

The illegal entry of Bahraini military launches into Qatari territorial waters without permission constitutes a violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Qatar and a threat its security. The State of Qatar condemns these dangerous and illegal acts.



The fact that this maritime violation and the air violation noted in my above-mentioned letter both occurred within such a short period only serves to further increase tensions. It shows that Bahrain is disregarding its obligations under international law and attempting to create incidents that could undermine stability, increase tension in the region, and threaten regional and international peace and security. In that regard, I should like to remind you of the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the 2001 boundary dispute between the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Bahrain, which must be complied with and not violated. We stress that the State of Qatar complies with that ruling and exercises its sovereign rights in accordance with the provisions of that ruling regarding the territorial boundaries of the two countries. Therefore, acting on the basis of Articles 34 and 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, Qatar draws the attention of the Security Council to this serious incident and calls upon the Organization yet again to take the measures required under the Charter to maintain international peace and security and put an end to the malicious violations being committed by Bahrain.

In closing, we affirm that the Government of Qatar is committed to a policy of self-restraint in response to these irresponsible, provocative and repeated actions to which it has been subjected. However, Qatar strongly condemns and rejects any violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and reserves its full right to respond to any violations, as is its legitimate right. Qatar will not hesitate to take the measures required to defend its sovereignty, borders, airspace, maritime space and national security, in accordance with international laws and norms.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Permanent Representative
