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LETTER DATED 29 NOVEMBER 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the letter of His Excellency Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addressed to His Excellency Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, concerning the repatriation of sick and wounded prisoners of war.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad Ja'afar MAHALLATI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Text of the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the President of
the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran held fruitful and constructive talks with the International Committee of the Red Cross in early November, and following the Islamic Republic's proposal as to the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war on a reciprocal basis, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to this effect. In the course of the negotiations between the representatives, relevant authorities of the two parties, it was agreed that in addition to the repatriated prisoners of war, necessary information would be provided as to those sick and wounded prisoners of war who, for various reasons, are not repatriated to their country. On this basis, 155 sick and wounded Iraqi prisoners of war were repatriated on 24, 26 and 27 November 1988 and the necessary information on the remaining Iraqi prisoners of war was provided. This information basically concerned those prisoners of war who had sought asylum in the Islamic Republic of Iran or were not considered eligible by the Mixed Medical Commission, established in accordance with the said Memorandum of Understanding.

Unfortunately, Iraq, by refusing to repatriate 22 sick and wounded Iranian prisoners of war without any justification and not providing the necessary information, violated the Memorandum of Understanding as of the very first day of the exchange. By continuing this practice, Iraq refused to repatriate a total of 67 sick and wounded Iranian prisoners of war.

Based on the official communications from the International Committee of the Red Cross, these 67 prisoners of war should have been repatriated during the said dates. Authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran warned the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross from the very beginning of the exchange that should this trend continue, Iraq will, in practice, keep a large number of sick and wounded Iranian prisoners of war in captivity, and that their repatriation would not be realized according to the Memorandum of Understanding. Therefore, in order to create the necessary atmosphere and confidence for the exchange of all sick and wounded prisoners of war, the 67 sick and wounded Iranian prisoners of war must be immediately repatriated. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while expressing its gratitude for Your Excellency's efforts and those of the International Committee of the Red Cross, reiterates, once again, its readiness for the repatriation of all sick and wounded prisoners of war and endeavours towards this end in earnest and honesty.

Ali Akbar VELAYATI
Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Islamic Republic of Iran