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LETTER DATED 17 JANUARY 1990 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 transmit to you herewith the text of a statement made by an official Iraqi spokesman on 17 January 1990.

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

(Signed) Abdul-Amir A. AL-ANBARI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement made by an official Iraqi spokesman

1. An official Iraqi spokesman has announced the release and repatriation of 20 sick and wounded Iranian prisoners under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This measure is a confirmation of Iraq's humanitarian approach and of its commitment to international law and religious precepts.
2. The Iraqi official spokesman stated that the number of prisoners recently released by the Iranian side represented only a very small fraction of the sick and wounded, to say nothing of the total number of more than 100,000.
3. The Iranian decision to release a very small number of sick and wounded prisoners is no more than a propaganda exercise aimed at reducing international pressure on the Iranian régime in view of its disgraceful attitude towards the prisoner-of-war issue. That attitude is in violation of international humanitarian law and of the third Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949, which requires that all prisoners should be released and repatriated without delay on cessation of active hostilities. Active hostilities ceased on 20 August 1988.
4. On this occasion, Iraq wishes to emphasize once again the initiative of President Saddam Hussein, calling for the release and repatriation of all sick and wounded prisoners without exception, for the release and repatriation of those who have spent a long period of time in captivity, namely those captured during 1980, 1981 and 1982, and for the registration of all prisoners still unregistered. All of those proposals are in the framework of the chief, global proposal for the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war so as to bring an end to their suffering and to the concern of their families.
5. Iraq calls upon ICRC and upon the international community to meet their responsibilities and to bring pressure to bear on the Iranian régime to accept the optimum solution, which is the full exchange of all prisoners of war, in implementation of the third Geneva Convention of 1949.