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LETTER DATED 24 JANUARY 1990 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Having noted the letter dated 15 January 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/21078), which confirms the approach adopted by the Iranian régime of making use of propaganda tricks in order to mislead the United Nations and the international community so as to reduce the pressure on it to engage in a comprehensive exchange of prisoners, we should like to state the following:

1. The claims made by the Iranian régime to the effect that it has been making efforts to mitigate the suffering of the prisoners since the inception of the war are false. They have no relation to reality, given that the régime in question persists in its failure to respond to the numerous initiatives announced by Iraq concerning the need for a comprehensive exchange of prisoners in accordance with the third Geneva Convention of 1949. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the other international and humanitarian organizations are fully aware of the positions of both Iraq and Iran on this humanitarian issue.

It is clear from the figures given in the list contained in the Iranian letter showing the number of Iraqi prisoners already returned to Iraq that the latter represent only a very small part of the total number of Iraqi prisoners held by Iran, both registered and unregistered, who continue to languish in captivity despite the cessation of active hostilities on 20 August 1988. Reference to those figures, at this precise time, proves that it is the devious approach of the Iranian régime to exploit this matter as a propaganda exercise aimed at relieving the international pressure to which it is subjected in view of its disgraceful attitude towards the prisoner-of-war issue, an attitude which is in violation of international humanitarian law as represented by the third Geneva Convention of 1949.

2. It is stated in the Iranian letter that Iran has allowed 27,800 families to visit 9,900 Iraqi prisoners of war. This claim is untrue, and it is a clear demonstration of the character of the Iranian régime, which is renowned for mendacity, deception and duplicity. Iraq was the precursor in calling for the families of the prisoners, on both sides, to be allowed to visit them. The recent

initiative of President Saddam Hussein, which he announced on 6 January 1990 on the occasion of the anniversary of the establishment of the Iraqi army, contained a paragraph concerning the arrangement of such visits. However, these calls, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations and ICRC are aware, were not accepted by the Iranian side.

3. From the beginning of the war with Iran and up to the present moment, the Iraqi Government has spared no effort in endeavouring to halt the suffering of the prisoners of war. It established contacts with diverse international and humanitarian organizations and with foreign countries, and it responded positively to the various initiatives and calls to do everything possible to help bring about a full exchange of prisoners captured in the Iraq-Iran war. So that the United Nations may be fully aware of the Iranian prisoners that have been released by the Iraqi Government, of whom there are 977, we include here under a table showing the number of batches released together with the date of release.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Batch</u>	<u>Number of prisoners</u>	<u>Date of release</u>
1	First batch	35	16 January 1981
2	Second batch	40	25 August 1981
3	Third batch	37	15 December 1981
4	Fourth batch	32	30 April 1983
5	Fifth batch	190	29 January 1984
6	Sixth batch	100	20 October 1984
7	Seventh batch	30	27 May 1985
8	Eighth batch	30	2 July 1985
9	Ninth batch	29	7 August 1985
10	Tenth batch	28	5 September 1985
11	Eleventh batch	55	9 October 1985
12	Miscellaneous batch	8	Handed over to their relatives under the supervision of ICRC
13	Twelfth batch	17	21 November 1985
14	Thirteenth batch	25	30 October 1988
15	Fourteenth batch	56	24, 26 and 27 November 1988
16	Fifteenth batch	255	23 and 24 January 1989
17	Sixteenth batch	20	18 January 1990
	Total	977	

4. The Iraqi Government takes this opportunity to reaffirm the initiative announced by President Saddam Hussein on 6 January 1990 on the occasion of the commemoration of the sixty-ninth anniversary of the establishment of the Iraqi army, in which he called for the release and repatriation of all sick and wounded prisoners without exception, for the release and repatriation of those who had spent a long period of time in captivity, namely those captured in 1980, 1981 and 1982, and for the registration of all prisoners still unregistered. All of this was within the context of achieving a full exchange of prisoners of war in order to bring an end to their suffering and the concern of their families.

The Government of my country hopes that you, ICRC and the international community will support this initiative and call upon Iran to accept it, in accordance with article 118 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949.

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

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

