



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 6 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Iraq has been combating international terrorism in self-defence and on behalf of all world States. Its army and security forces, including the Popular Mobilization Forces, have been waging an existential battle against the terrorist entity Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), whose cells are still active in Iraq and in neighbouring States. We have repeatedly asked our allies in the war on ISIL to refrain from drawing Iraq into their bilateral conflict. We have stressed that Iraq must not become the theatre of that conflict; its sole focus is on combating ISIL, and it earnestly endeavours to maintain strong relations with the two parties. If its security were destabilized and its stability undermined, nobody would benefit; on the contrary, the repercussions for regional and international security would be alarming.

The series of events that has taken place in Iraq over the last week has caused the security situation in the country to deteriorate rapidly. First, rockets were fired at the K1 military base near Kirkuk, in an alarming development. The United States of America responded unilaterally by bombarding joint headquarters of the Iraqi Army and the Popular Mobilization Forces near the Iraqi-Syrian border, without consulting with the Iraqi Government or allowing the necessary scope or time to investigate the circumstances of the incident. At 1900 hours on 29 December 2019, American aircraft targeted those sites along the border with Syria, in the area south of the town of Al-Qa'im. Dozens of members of the Iraqi forces serving under the leadership of the Prime Minister, who is Commander-in-Chief of the Iraqi armed forces, were killed or injured. The incident led to a wave of public anger, which took the form of demonstrations outside the United States embassy in Baghdad, including some attempts to damage the outer wall of the embassy building. In accordance with the obligations of host countries as set forth in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), the Iraqi Government diligently undertook to fully protect diplomatic and consular missions in Iraq. It fulfilled its duty by providing adequate protection to the United States embassy building and peacefully bringing an end to the demonstration in front of the building. It had hoped that all parties would then show restraint, help it to strengthen security and stability, and understand the sensitive nature of the broader political and security situation in the country. However, United States forces – which are present in Iraq at the request of the Iraqi Government, and subject to its approval – unexpectedly conducted another military operation, in a serious violation of the sovereignty of Iraq. At 0145 hours on 3 January 2020, the United States Air Force bombarded two cars near Baghdad International Airport, a civilian facility. The cars had been transporting Iraqi citizens and their guests. The deputy leader of the Popular

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Mobilization Forces, Jamal Ja'far Muhammad (known as Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis) – an Iraqi military leader with an official post – was killed along with a group of Iraqi and allied leaders. The incident amounts to an aggression against the State, Government and people of Iraq; a flagrant violation of the terms under which United States forces are present in the country; an alarming escalation that could ignite a devastating war in Iraq, the region and the world; and a grave threat to the societal security of the country.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq condemns in the strongest possible terms these American attacks, which violate the sovereignty of Iraq and the principles of international law. It stresses that it is fully committed to the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution and, in particular, the provision that Iraqi territory shall not be used as a theatre of operations against neighbouring States. It is committed to ensuring that foreign forces active in Iraq at its request do not come under attack. It emphasizes that any military mobilization or operations on Iraqi territory that take place without its approval and without prior coordination constitute provocative and hostile acts that violate the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant provisions of international law and the premises set forth in the letter dated 25 June 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/440) and the letter dated 20 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/691). In those letters, Iraq stated that the provision of assistance in the areas of military training and the use of advanced technology and weapons necessary to combat the terrorist entity ISIL must take place in accordance with the relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements, in full respect for the national sovereignty and Constitution of Iraq, and in coordination with the Iraqi armed forces.

Lastly, Iraq calls on the Security Council to condemn the air strikes and assassination, which amount to extra-judicial killings and contravene with the human rights obligations of the United States. This should not, however, become a means to avoid international responsibility. Iraq urges the members of the Security Council to assume their responsibility by ensuring that Iraq is not drawn into international and regional crises and tensions. It calls on all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate, ensure that Iraq does not become a theatre of this conflict, and refrain from taking any action that could violate its sovereignty or endanger the safety and security of its citizens. We also call on the Security Council to assume its responsibility by holding accountable any party that commits such violations, which run counter to human rights, not to mention international law, and cause the law of the jungle to hold sway over the international community. My Government also urges all parties to refrain from taking any unilateral action that could weaken or disrupt joint international counter-terrorism efforts. Terrorists could take advantage of such a situation to carry out attacks on Iraqi territory or elsewhere, posing a grave threat to Iraqi, regional and international security.

(Signed) Mohammed Hussein **Bahr Aluloom**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative