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Letter dated 7 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my letter dated 3 January 2020 regarding the terrorist attack by the armed forces of the United States of America against Martyr Major General Qasem Soleimani, the Commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and his companions on 3 January 2020 at Baghdad International Airport, I am writing to draw your kind attention to yet another provocative statement by the United States threatening to use further force against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On 3 January 2020 and almost immediately after the terrorist attack, the President of the United States threatened Iran “in particular”, stating, “We have all of those targets already fully identified, and I am ready and prepared to take whatever action is necessary”.¹

On 4 January 2020, the President of the United States once again threatened to “hit very fast and very hard” “52 Iranian sites”, including some very important to “the Iranian culture”.² After a few hours on the same day, he threatened Iran again by stating, “We will hit them harder than they have ever been hit before”.³

On 5 January 2020, when faced with the criticism that targeting Iran’s cultural sites would be considered a war crime under international law, he asserted anew that “We’re not allowed to touch their cultural site? It doesn’t work that way”.⁴ On the same day, he yet again brazenly threatened that “the United States will quickly [and] fully strike” Iran “in a disproportionate manner”.⁵

Overall, only in three days, the President of the United States, through extremely provocative and harsh statements, has threatened five times to use force against a founding member of the United Nations. Publicly repeating such provocative statements and unlawful threats is without a doubt a clear call for lawlessness, chaos and disorder at the international level, particularly with respect to a highly important common good such as peace and security.

Such unbridled threats by the President of the United States indisputably constitute a gross violation of the peremptory norms of international law as well as

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-killing-qasem-soleimani/>.

² <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1213593975732527112>.

³ <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1213684819537932293>.

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/us/politics/trump-iran-cultural-sites.html>.

⁵ <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1213919480574812160>.



the very fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly its Article 2(4) that clearly prohibits the threat or use of force. Given the confrontational nature of these inflammatory statements and threats, as well as the broad and adverse ramifications of the military adventurism of the United States on regional and international peace and security, it is crystal clear that this country bears the full responsibility for all consequences.

It is also evident that the threat to target Iranian cultural sites is certainly a flagrant violation of the basic norms and principles of international law, and any attack against such sites would be a war crime. Additionally, it should be born in mind that “damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind”.⁶

Recalling that the current insecurity and instability in the broader Persian Gulf region is the direct result of the unlawful invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003 as well as its massive military presence and its “divide and rule” policy in the region, it is also worth noting that all the abovesaid threats, including to dispatch more troops and “brand new beautiful equipment”⁷ to this already volatile region, would indeed further complicate the current tense situation.

I must also stress that the aforementioned statements and actions are only the tip of a submerged iceberg of the hostile policies and unlawful practices, as well as the threats and plots of the United States against Iran over the past 40 years.

While the Islamic Republic of Iran does not seek war, it seriously warns against any further military adventurism against it. Iran is determined to continue to strongly protect its people, to vigorously defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to fully secure its national interests. Accordingly, in conformity with international law and in exercising its inherent right to self-defence, Iran will take all necessary and proportionate measures against any threat or use of force. This is in accordance with its inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and Iran will not hesitate to exercise it when required.

The irresponsible policies and unlawful practices of the United States continue to not only endanger the very foundations of international law and order but also pose a real threat to international peace and security. The international community should not condone or tolerate this situation and must demand that the United States put an end to its continued unlawful and destabilizing measures in such a volatile region as the Middle East, particularly by withdrawing all its forces from the region.

Likewise, the United Nations Security Council must condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the unlawful threats and unfettered policies of the United States as well as hold it accountable for all of its wrongful acts and unlawful practices while compelling it to abide by the principles and rules of international law.

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

(Signed) **Majid Takht Ravanchi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

⁶ Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague, 14 May 1954, United Nations *Treaty Series*, vol. 249, No. 3511, p. 240, available at <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20249/volume-249-I-3511-English.pdf>.

⁷ <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1213689342272659456?lang=en>.