



Security Council

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Letter dated 19 August 2019 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

I am writing to you with reference to the letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([S/2019/536](#)) wherein, with respect to the incidents regarding the four oil tankers on 12 May 2019 and two oil tankers on 13 June 2019, baseless accusations were made against my country.

Given the widespread presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, such technically complicated operations undoubtedly could not have been carried out without the prior knowledge of the aforementioned forces. This fact should also be taken into account: that a number of these forces, historically, have conducted many false flag operations and, technically, have a high-profile capability to plan and execute single-handedly complicated operations, including in this region where they have massive military presence and intelligence activities.

The United States claim that on 12 May 2019 a number of Iranian attack craft travelled into the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates prior to the incidents is unfounded. Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, in carrying out their routine missions, namely, to preserve security and prevent illegal activities, operate within the territorial sea of the Islamic Republic of Iran and international waters. In this regard, the statement by an official of the United Arab Emirates also should be borne in mind: "Honestly, we can't point the blame at any country because we don't have evidence". Likewise, the claims with respect to the incidents concerning oil tankers on 13 June 2019 are baseless as well and the information provided is distorted, too.

With respect to the oil tanker *Front Altair*, the search and rescue vessels of the Islamic Republic of Iran were dispatched to the location of the incident immediately after receiving the distress call. They helped the 23-member crew – who had already been recovered by a Marshall Islands-flagged vessel – transfer to a place of refuge designated by the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran in the Iranian port of Jask. The crew later, in coordination with the ship agent, flew to Dubai. Iranian salvage units also cooperated with the owner of the vessel in the fire-fighting operation for the tanker, which was carried out successfully. All measures taken by the Iranian vessels, with regard to the oil tanker *Front Altair*, were carried out in accordance with the applicable international law and respective obligations of the Islamic Republic of Iran under relevant international legally binding instruments. The concerned report of the competent Iranian authorities was subsequently submitted to the International



Maritime Organization through the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London.

A similar approach was followed regarding the oil tanker *Kokuka Courageous*. Immediately after receiving the distress call, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre of Iran called and coordinated with the nearest passing ship in the area, the Netherlands-flagged MV *Coastal Ace*, to rescue the 21-member crew in distress. Given the fact that the incident had occurred in Iran's contiguous waters, the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran dispatched a team to investigate it in accordance with international regulations. However, United States forces in the area denied access of the Iranian investigative team to the vessel and thus prevented the Islamic Republic of Iran from fulfilling its obligations under international maritime conventions, especially the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue and the Code of International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran lodged, with the International Maritime Organization, its strong protest against the unlawful conduct of United States forces endangering the safety of navigation in the region and preventing efforts towards investigation by the Iranian maritime administration and the search and rescue team.

Moreover, the allegation that Iranian forces attempted to retrieve an unexploded mine after the attacks is also baseless. The alleged and yet quite unclear photographs and videos provide neither any acceptable evidence nor any conclusive proof. At the same time, from a technical point of view, retrieving an unexploded mine requires special devices and can in no way be carried out with bare hands. Likewise, the arguments of the United States regarding the Iranian origin of the limpet mines are seriously flawed, as limpet mines are produced by many countries and share multiple common features.

In the light of the above, I reject the allegations contained in the aforesaid letter of the United States, which, by abusing an established United Nations mechanism, disseminates fabrications and unfounded accusations against my country. This Iranophobic campaign is mainly aimed at increasing the political and economic pressures on Iran following the United States unlawful withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and imposition of unilateral illegal sanctions against Iran in violation of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). The main objective of the United States maximum pressure policy and economic terrorism against the Iranian people, as well as escalating and further destabilizing the security situation in the region, including through coalition-building for the so-called securing of international navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, is, inter alia, to justify the deployment of further foreign forces in this volatile region. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns this dangerous and destructive policy, which poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the entire region.

Contrary to its attempts to portray itself as one of the main advocates of maritime security, the United States, in violation of the rules of relevant international legally binding instruments, including in particular the Convention on the International Maritime Organization and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, has imposed its unlawful unilateral sanctions, preventing the provision of satellite services to Iranian ships. As a result, in addition to violating the human rights of the seafarers, the United States has endangered maritime safety and security and disrupted the protection of the marine environment in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea. Iran's protests against such unlawful measures by the United States have already been recorded with the International Maritime Organization.

Bearing in mind the continued United States coercion, intimidation, and malign behaviour in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates that the massive military presence of the United States in the region has not only been and continues to be the main source of insecurity and instability in the wider Persian Gulf region but also presents the most significant threat to its peace and security. It is quite evident that the security of the Persian Gulf must be protected only by its littoral States. At the same time, the main obstacle for the formation of a security arrangement in the Persian Gulf is the presence of foreign, particularly United States, forces in the region.

With the longest coastline in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, the Islamic Republic of Iran has historically assumed responsibility for securing traffic order as well as providing navigation security therein and has successfully fulfilled this responsibility by maintaining their security at the highest level for decades. Iran takes this responsibility seriously and, in compliance with its respective obligations and in exercising its relevant rights, is determined to continue securing international navigation and preventing any unlawful activities therein.

It would be highly appreciated if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

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