



Middle East Studies Association of North America

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December 19, 1990

His Excellency Saddam Hussain
President, Prime Minister and Chairman of the
Revolutionary Command Council
Presidential Palace
Karradat Mariam
Baghdad, Iraq

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association is deeply concerned about the undermining of university life and denial of academic freedom in Kuwait. The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2200 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The Association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. The Association is committed to ensuring respect for academic freedom throughout the region.

The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits collective punishment of persons living in military occupied territories, enjoins the occupying power to facilitate the proper working of educational institutions, and forbids the destruction of property. We are seriously concerned that the following measures contravene the terms of the Convention and constitute grievous violations of academic freedom:

- * the dismissal of the rector of Kuwait University Dr. Abdullah Shuaib, the vice rector Dr. Rasha al-Sabah, the secretary general Dr. Husain al-Mahmud, the deans of the colleges of Arts and Science; Commerce, Economics and Political Science; Education; Engineering; Islamic Law; Law; and Medicine.
- * the replacement of Kuwaiti university administrators by Iraqi officials.
- * the intimidation of faculty and staff in Kuwait University in order to compel them to teach at the opening of the fall semester on 15 September 1990.
- * the eviction of faculty members and their families from their homes so that their houses could be used by Iraqi army officers.
- * the placement of Iraqi troops on the campus of Kuwait University and its use for military barracks and for the detention and interrogation of persons arrested by the Iraqi army, police and security services.

- * the removal of scientific and medical laboratory equipment, computers, library books, archival documents, professors' personal papers, and furniture from Kuwait University to Iraqi territory.
- * the seizure and removal of equipment and documents from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology.
- * the appointment of an Iraqi director for Dar al-Athar Al-Islamiyya, connected to the Kuwait National Museum, and the subsequent removal to Iraq of more than 7,000 pieces of its priceless collection of Islamic art.

We respectfully request that your government publicly clarify our information regarding the conditions and status of Kuwait University and the other educational, cultural and research institutions in Kuwait. We further request that your government return undamaged the materials and equipment that have been removed from those institutions and reinstate the faculty and staff so that they can return to their proper functioning as academic institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

AHB/nd

cc:

Ambassador Abd al-Amir Al-Anbari, Iraqi Mission to the United Nations

Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Sadiq al-Mashat, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

Abd al-Qadir Izzeddin Hamudi, Minister of Education

Latif al-Jasim, Minister of Culture and Information

Iraq Desk, US Department of State

Mr. Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, US Department of State

Mr. Daniel P. Moynihan, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Dr. Michael Van Dusen, Middle East Subcommittee, House Committee on Foreign Relations