

# The UN Secretary-General's Investigation Mechanism: missions during the Iran-Iraq War and in Iraqi Kurdish areas

*Draft as of 14.00 GMT, 13 September 2013*

*Subject to revision as new information becomes available.*

*Please read the note in the shaded box on the final page. This chronology extract relates to communications between Iran, Iraq and UN (and related) entities regarding allegations of use of chemical weapons, investigation activities subsequently undertaken, and responses by the UN Secretary-General and the UN Security Council; plus reactions to all of the above.*

19801212

**12 December 1980** The United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution 35/144 C on the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The resolution notes that the Protocol has no machinery for investigating allegations of use of chemical or biological weapons and notes 'reports alleging that chemical weapons have been used in recent wars and certain military operations in various regions of the world' and requests the Secretary-General to carry out investigations into such allegations 'with the assistance of qualified medical and technical experts'. While the resolution calls upon all states to co-operate in such investigations, collection of evidence on-site shall be 'with the consent of the countries concerned'. The resolution makes no mention of any state by name.

19821213

**13 December 1982** The United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution 37/98D on the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The resolution generally follows the pattern of resolution 35/144C [see 12 December 1980] with the addition of language requesting the Secretary-General 'with the assistance of qualified consultant experts, to devise procedures for the timely and efficient investigation of information concerning activities that may constitute a violation of the Geneva Protocol or the relevant rules of customary international law and to assemble and organize systematically documentation relating to the identification of signs and symptoms associated with the use of such agents as a means of facilitating such investigations and the medical treatment that may be required'. Again, collection of evidence on-site shall be 'with the consent of the countries concerned'. The resolution makes no mention of any state by name.

19830818

**18 August 1983** In New York, the Iranian UN Representative, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the UN Secretary-General. The main thrust of his letter is to complain that Iraq has been attacking civilians, but he includes the line 'Furthermore, the ruling regime of the Baathist Party of Iraq, in contravention of international norms, dropped chemical bombs in the operational theatre of Val Fajr-2.' [1]

[Note: This appears to be the first occasion on which Iran presents to the United Nations an allegation of Iraqi chemical weapons use.]

[1] Letter dated 18 August 1983 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, as reproduced in UN document S/15934, dated 18 August 1983.

19831103

**3 November 1983** In New York, the Iranian UN Representative, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the UN Secretary-General: 'I have the honour to inform you that during the past weeks the Iraqi forces of aggression have used chemical weapons on numerous occasions and in various sectors of the front'. He requests a UN investigation, stating: 'It would be most helpful if Your Excellency's representative was given the necessary mandate to examine the medical and military evidence of the chemical weapons employed by the Iraqi forces of aggression'. He concludes: 'A report containing detailed information, as well as evidence concerning chemical attacks by Iraq, will be submitted subsequently.'

[Note: this is often referred to as the first occasion on which Iran presents to the United Nations an allegation of Iraqi chemical weapons use, notwithstanding at least one earlier letter [see 18 August]. For example, 'On 3 November 1983,

Consolidated list of all UNSG investigation mechanism missions up until 2013			
Date	Locations visited	Investigators	Report reference
1981-1982	Thailand	Edward Ambeva, Nestor Castillo, Esmat Ezz, Humberto Guerra	A/36/613, 20 November 1981
1981-1982	Pakistan, Thailand	Edward Ambeva, Esmat Ezz, Humberto Guerra, Hugo Javier	A/37/259, 1 December 1982
March 1984	Iran	Gustav Andersson, Manuel Dominguez, Peter Dunn, Ulrich Imobersteg	S/16433, 26 March 1984 [also issued as A/39/210]
April 1985	European hospitals	Manuel Dominguez	S/17127, 24 April 1985
March 1986	Iran	Gustav Andersson, Manuel Dominguez, Peter Dunn, Ulrich Imobersteg	S/17911, 12 March 1986 [released 14 March 1986]
May 1987	Iran & Iraq	Gustav Andersson, Manuel Dominguez, Peter Dunn, Ulrich Imobersteg	S/18852, 8 May 1987 [released 13 May 1987]
April 1988	Iran & Iraq	Manuel Dominguez	S/19823, 25 April 1988
July 1988	Iran	Erik Dahlgren, Manuel Dominguez	S/20060, 20 July 1988 [released 1 August 1988]
July 1988	Iraq	Erik Dahlgren, Manuel Dominguez	S/20063, 25 July 1988 [released 1 August 1988]
August 1988	Iran	Erik Dahlgren, Ulrich Imobersteg, ANP van Heijst	S/20134, 19 August 1988 [released 23 August 1988]
March 1992	Mozambique	Sven-Åke Persson, Heiner Staub, John Thompson	S/24065, 12 June 1992
July 1992	Azerbaijan	Johan Santesson, Heiner Staub, Jan Willems	S/24344, 24 July 1992
2013	Syria	Åke Sellström, nine OPCW, three WHO	

the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran alleged for the first time in a communication to the United Nations that chemical weapons were being used by Iraq'[2] and 'On 3 November 1983, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed for the first time in communication to the UN Secretary-General that chemical weapons were being used by Iraq in the conflict between the two countries'[3]. This does, however, appear to be the first formal request for an investigation.]

[1] *Letter dated 3 November 1983 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16128, dated 7 November 1983.

[2] 'Note by the Secretary-General', *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN document S/16433, 26 March 1984, paragraph 1.

[3] *Letter dated 30 July 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/2002/860, dated 2 August 2002.

19831124

**Q 24 November 1983** An 'International Medical Seminar' in Tehran receives presentations on the allegations that chemical weapons have been used against Iran in the Iran-Iraq war. The seminar consists of some 700 delegates from 65 countries including some European doctors who visit casualties in hospital.[1] The conference, being held at the Hilton Hotel, issues a final statement recommending the establishment of a permanent commission to survey damage caused by 'chemical and biological' bombardment of Iranian areas and calls on the United Nations and the 'International Red Cross' to dispatch fact-finding committees to Iran in order to investigate the results of Iraqi chemical attacks.[2]

The following day, *The Guardian* newspaper reports: 'Iran is obviously hoping that one by-product of the conference will be publicity and perhaps endorsement of its allegations on gas warfare' and concludes that the gathering: 'has enabled some independent doctors to look at the evidence, and in the opinion of three British specialists, it has not been faked'. One of these (unnamed) specialists is quoted: 'I do not think there is any doubt that the Iraqis are using gas', and another: 'It looks like nitrogen mustard gas'.[3]

[1] Judith Perera, 'Britain aids Gulf chemical warfare', *New Scientist*, 22-29 December 1983, pp. 867-68.

[2] IRNA (in English), 0930 GMT 25 November 1983, as reported in 'Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons Condemned', BBC-SWB, 28 November 1983, ME/7502/A/1.

[3] Andrew Veitch, 'British doctors back Tehran claims that Iraq uses poison gas', *The Guardian* (London), 25 November 1983, p 8.

19831215

**15 December 1983** Iran's UN Representative, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the UN Secretary-General, saying 'the international community has not responded to our requests concerning the dispatch of a mission [see 3 November] in order to examine, inter alia, areas affected by chemical weapons used by Iraqi mercenaries against civilian targets inside the Islamic Republic. This undue delay has resulted in the elimination of parts of the evidence, which are bound to disappear with the passage of time'.

[1] *Letter dated 15 December 1983 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, as reproduced in UN document S/16220.

19840104

**4 January 1984** At the United Nations in New York, the Iranian Permanent Representative delivers fragments of bombs alleged to have been used in chemical weapons attacks to the UN Secretariat.[1]

At a press conference before the handover, Ambassador Said Rajaie-Khorassani displays four specimens of shrapnel,

sand and tree bark gathered from a battle front that he says contain chemical substances that burn the skin. Khorassani, arguing he is being conservative with figures, claims '10 people were martyred by chemical bombs and more than 300 people affected in the Iraqi attacks. ... The symptoms were burning of the skin, vomiting, irritation of the eyes and sometimes blindness and death'.

According to the Ambassador, the items were brought to the United Nations because an invitation to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, to send an investigation team to inspect evidence the battle front had gone unanswered for more than two months [see 3 November 1983]. Francois Giuliani, spokesman for the Secretary-General, confirms an Iranian request for an investigation was received but says, 'Our hands are tied by a Security Council resolution that Iran declines to recognize'.[2] He does not specify the resolution he is referring to.

[1] Referred to in the speech by Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to the Conference on Disarmament, 16 February 1984, as reproduced in CD/PV.242.

[2] John Usher, [no title], United Press International, 4 January 1984.

19840130

**30 January 1984** In Geneva, the Permanent Representative of Iran, Nasrollah Kazemi Kamyab, writes to the President of the Conference on Disarmament giving details of the attack with chemical weapons alleged to have taken place some six months earlier [see 9 August 1983]. The letter repeats many details published earlier but also reports results of laboratory analyses indicating the use of 'nitrogenous compounds usually known as "mustard gas"'.[1] [See also 24 November 1983.]

[1] *Letter dated 30 January 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting a report containing a description of an attack with chemical weapons in Piranshahr, Iran*, CD/432, 13 February 1984.

19840216

**16 February 1984** In Geneva, Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati speaks in the Conference on Disarmament. The Minister complains of a lack of concern about what is happening during the war: 'in spite of the fact that we have, in a well-documented manner, informed the international community of the use of chemical weapons against the people of Iran in the course of the invasion of my country by foreign troops, no positive or beneficial reaction has yet been noted'. Calling for action from the rest of the world he says: 'Has the United Nations Organization not been duty-bound by the Resolution 37/98 of the General Assembly [see 15 December 1982] to investigate any information concerning the use of chemical weapons by any Member State reaching the United Nations and inform the Members of the results?' [See also 4 January.]

[1] The speech is reproduced in CD document CD/PV.242, 16 February 1984.

19840228

**28 February 1984** Iran invites representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Iranian soldiers who, it is claimed, have been wounded by chemical bombs dropped by Iraqi planes.[1]

[1] Associated Press (from Nicosia), 'Iraq Renews Its Warning to Shipping', *New York Times*, 29 February 1984, p. A6. See also: *Letter dated 29 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16378, 1 March 1984.

19840302

**2 March 1984** Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the Secretary-General claiming that Iraq continues 'savage missile attacks and aerial bombardment of innocent civilians and residential areas, and

has kept on using chemical weapons'. The Ambassador lists alleged attacks, since 25 February, 'over the cities of Baneh, Ilam, Khorramabad, Poledokhtar, Kohdasht, Islamabad, Gilan-e-qharb, Borujerd, Saghez, Houvizeh, Bostan, Mahabad and Bakhteran which resulted in the martyrdom of 246 people and 1,507 injured' but does not specify which types of attacks may have been made in which locations.[1]

A letter couched in similar terms is sent to the President of the Conference on Disarmament by the Iranian Ambassador in Geneva, Nasrollah Kazemi Kamyab.[2]

[1] *Letter dated 2 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16384, 5 March 1984.

[2] *Letter dated 2 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament Containing Information on Missile Attacks and Bombardments in Both Military and Civilian Areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, CD document CD/447, 9 March 1984.

19840304

**4 March 1984** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati says the UN should investigate the use by Iraq of chemical weapons in accordance with resolution 37/98D [see 13 December 1982 and 16 February]. He says the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should be assigned to the investigation.[1]

At UN Headquarters the following day, Iranian Ambassador Said Rajaie Khorassani reports that he will make a formal request for a UN investigation of the chemical weapons attacks by Iraq.[2]

[1] Tehran home service, 1630 GMT 4 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Message to UN on Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq', BBC-SWB, 6 March 1984, ME/7584/A/1.

[2] Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), Associated Press, 5 March 1984, AM cycle.

19840305

**5 March 1984** The Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, tells a press briefing in New York that there is 'overwhelming evidence' of use of chemical weapons by Iraq against his country, however, such evidence will 'fade away' in the field unless United Nations authorities record it. He says some 1,000 persons have been injured by chemical weapons, 35 per cent of whom have been slightly injured.[1]

[1] 'Chemical weapons in Iran: confirmation by specialists, condemnation by Security Council', *UN Chronicle*, March 1984, p. 3.

19840307

**7 March 1984** A Red Cross team [see 28 February] reports on its examination of wounded Iranian combatants who exhibit symptoms of exposure to chemical weapons.[1]

The Red Cross statement reads: 'A medical team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, surveying [*sic*] the needs caused by the latest clashes at the Iran-Iraq war front, was confronted on 6 March, during Visits to several hospitals at Tehran, with 160 cases of wounded combatants who presented a disquieting clinical picture, whose nature leads to the presumption of the recent use of substances prohibited by international law'.

'The common symptoms found by the ICRC doctor among all the wounded — extensive superficial burns (first and second degree), serious respiratory problems, keratoconjunctivitis — appear to be responding favorably to treatment. However, the clinical progress of some patients is marked, eight days after exposure, by severe problems of the blood crisis, accompanied by a major drop in the number of white corpuscles (leukopenia). These problems, linked to respiratory and renal difficulties, have led to the deaths of several patients, two of them dying during the ICRC delegates' visit'.

'Parallel to the steps it is undertaking with the parties concerned, the ICRC strenuously recalls that the use on the battlefield of toxic substances is incompatible with the respect of the principle of humanity and constitutes a violation of customary and codified rules of the law of war'.

The Government of Iraq declares that this report is unfair and, in a memorandum to the ICRC says 'the Foreign Ministry protests vehemently against the ICRC stand and views it as a political and biased stand which fully contradicts the role that has been entrusted to it by the Geneva conventions. Iraq had previously reiterated its commitment to international agreements based on the principled stand it has been adopting in its foreign policy. Iraqi officials have stressed that chemical weapons were not used in the dispute with Iran. To prove this to world public opinion, Iraq is ready to co-operate with any neutral party so that those allegations can be investigated.' [2]

[1] Lois Ember, 'Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp 16-18; [Middle East Staff], 'Red Cross findings support claims of chemical warfare', *Financial Times*, 8 March 1984.

[2] INA, 1350 GMT 11 March 1984, as reported in 'Iraqi Rejection of "Biased" Red Cross Report', BBC-SWB, 13 March 1984, ME/7590/A/1.

19840307

**7 March 1984** UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar states that he 'strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons wherever and whenever this may occur'. However, he stops short of saying he would investigate Iranian charges that Iraq used gas bombs against Iranian troops last week [see 4 March]. [1]

[1] Alex Efty (from Nicosia), [no title], Associated Press, 7 March 1984.

19840308

**8 March 1984** Spokesman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Francois Giuliani, issues a one-sentence statement: 'The Secretary-General has decided to send experts to Iran to ascertain the facts in connection with the allegations of the use of chemical weapons'. [1]

Earlier in the day, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the Secretary-General making a further formal request [see 4 March] for a UN investigation of the chemical weapons attacks by Iraq. He calls delaying 'tactics' by the United Nations 'deplorable' meaning that 'not only the vital and decisive evidence of the crime of chemical warfare has faded away in the field, but the criminal enemy was also farther abetted in its savagery and consequently resorted to the same prohibited weapon more and more extensively, to such an extent that the media at the international level, as well as many other independent sources, like hospitals, physicians, Governments and the International Committee of the Red Cross [see 7 March] have testified to the perpetration of these criminal acts by Iraq.' He notes: 'It is evident that the obligation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in fulfilment of the resolution 37/98 D [see 13 December 1982] does not require the involvement of any other organ of the United Nations'. [2]

The Secretary-General himself does not refer to powers deriving from the above resolution in carrying out the investigation, rather noting 'the humanitarian principles embodied in the Charter and of the moral responsibilities vested in his office'. [3] The decision to send the team is criticised by Soviet UN envoy Richard S Ovinnikov who suggests that the Secretary-General should have consulted the Security Council before deciding on such an important matter [4] and that the decision was illegal. [5]. Ovinnikov's objections are said to have 'managed to delay the team's trip but not prevent it'. [6]

There is some suggestion that the decision to proceed with the investigation was prompted by the Red Cross report [see 7 March].[7]

[1] Michael Littlejohns, 'UN to probe charges that Iraq used chemical weapons', *Reuter*, 8 March 1984.

[2] *Letter dated 8 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/163397, 8 March 1984 (also circulated as UN document A/39/127, 9 March 1984).

[3] 'Note by the Secretary-General', paragraph 4, introducing: *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[4] [no author listed], 'Soviet Envoy Objects to UN Chemicals Weapons Probe in Iran', *Associated Press*, 12 March 1984.

[5] IRNA, 1821 GMT 13 March 1984, as reported in 'The USSR and Chemical Weapons in the Iran-Iraq War', *BBC-SWB*, 15 March 1984, ME/7592/A/1

[6] [editorial, no author listed], 'None of your beeswax', *Wall Street Journal* (European edition), 30 March 1984, p 8.

[7] Lois Ember, 'Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp 16-18.

19840310

**10 March 1984** Foreign Minister of Iran, Ali Akbar Velayati, calls on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to send a mission to investigate Iraqi use of chemical weapons against Iranian armed forces. Writing to the Foreign Minister of India, Mr Narasimha Rao, chair of the NAM foreign ministers, he says: 'The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expects the Non-Aligned Movement to delegate a fact-finding team to Iran in order to witness personally the victims of chemical weapons as used by the Iraqis against the Iranian soldiers, so that the peoples in the non-aligned member countries may better learn of the ignominious crime against humanistic principles by the Baghdad government'.[1]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1840 GMT 10 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Appeals to International Bodies on Chemical Weapons', *BBC-SWB*, 12 March 1984, ME/7589/A/1.

19840313

**13 March 1984** The investigation team dispatched by the UN Secretary-General [see 8 March] arrives in Tehran. The team comprises: Dr. Gustav Andersson, a senior research chemist at the National Defense Research Institute (FOA) in Sweden; Dr. Manuel Dominguez, an army colonel and professor of preventive medicine in Spain; Dr. Peter Dunn, a scientist at the Materials Laboratory in Australia's Defense Department, and Col. Ulrich Imobersteg, Chief of Chemical Weapons Defense of the Swiss Army.[1] The team is accompanied by Iqbal Riza from the Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs who had been part of a UN Secretary-General's investigation in May 1983 into allegations of attacks on civilian areas in the Iran-Iraq War.[2]

On Wednesday 14 March the team visits the war zone — surveying sites, examining aerial bombs and extracting samples, and interviewing patients in a field hospital. On 15 March, team members examine patients in Tehran hospitals and analyse samples collected the previous day. On 16 and 17 March they examine in Tehran aerial bombs transported from the war zone. On 18 March, after Iranian authorities allege that a further chemical attack has taken place, the specialists returned to the war zone, examine patients in the Tafti Stadium Infirmary, receive new samples and return to Tehran for further patient interviews. On 19 March, the team leaves Tehran for Geneva, where they prepare their report over the next two days.[3]

Riza later shares with an official from the US mission to the UN some additional details relating to the visit. One detail is reported in a cable to Washington in the following terms:

'Iranian authorities showed the UN team gas masks and associated gear which they said had been captured from the Iraqis. The equipment was manufactured in Eastern Europe and bore Arabic script. This was not included in the team's report'.[4]

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[2] *Mission to inspect civilian areas in Iran and Iraq which have been subject to military attack*, UN Security Council document S/15834, 20 June 1983.

[3] 'Chemical weapons in Iran: confirmation by specialists, condemnation by Security Council', *UN Chronicle*, March 1984, p 3.

[4] US Mission to the United Nations in New York, cable to US Secretary of State, 'UN report on chemical weapons use in Iran/Iraq war: consideration in security council', 28 March 1984, as posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

19840321

**H 21 March 1984** [UN report completed [see 13 March]. Report confirms that, 'chemical weapons in the form of aerial bombs have been used in the areas inspected in Iran by the specialists...'. [\*add more\*] ] [1]

The report is made public in five days time.

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

19840326

**26 March 1984** The UN releases the report of its investigation of possible chemical weapons use in the Iran-Iraq War [see 21 March].[1] In transmitting the report of the investigation team to the Security Council, the Secretary-General says he 'cannot but deplore that their unanimous conclusions substantiate the allegations that chemical weapons have been used'.[2]

Iraqi officials at the UN criticize the report for alleged bias.[3] The Government claims 'Iraq has not used such weapons, and if the experts sent by the Secretary-General found substances of this kind in some Iranian areas, Iran is the one which bears responsibility for that'.[4]

Notwithstanding the efforts of the authors of the report not to attribute blame to any country for the use of chemical warfare, this report is taken by many reporters and analysts to support the case that Iraq was the culprit.[5] Press reports suggest it is unlikely that the Security Council, 'where a majority tilt towards Iraq', would issue a condemnation.[6]

The report is often mis-quoted. For example, one later analysis states 'UN Document S/16433, referring to an event in August 1983, officially concludes, "Iraqi forces have used chemical warfare against Iranian forces"' when no incident in August is referred to and the quotation does not appear in the report.[7]

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984 (also circulated as A/39/210, 27 April 1984).

[2] 'Note by the Secretary-General', paragraph 8, introducing: *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[3] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), 'Gas used against Iran, says UN team', *The Times* (London), 27 March 1984, p. 1.

[4] *Letter dated 27 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16438, 27 March 1984, 3 pp.

[5] For example: Michael Kallenbach (from UN New York), 'Poison gas dilemma for UN', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 28 March 1984; Agence France Press, as in: 'UN team proves Iraq used poison gas in Iran', *The Australian*, 28 March 1984.

[6] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), 'UN report is first proof of breach in chemical war ban', *The Times* (London), 28 March 1984, p. 8.

[7] Jack Mendelsohn and David Grahame, *Arms Control Chronology*, Center for Defense Information, Winter 2002, p 101.

19840330

**30 March 1984** The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement in which the members of the Council 'strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons' in the Iran-Iraq War without naming either country as using them. Instead, it encourages both to adhere to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.[1] The media notes that Iraq is not named but views the statement as a condemnation of that country[2] and describes the statement as a 'vague condemnation ... the weakest form of action the council could take'.[3]

Iran's Ambassador to the UN tells the press that if the Council does not specifically condemn Iraq for its actions, it would show that 'the Council is a joke'.[4] An official Iranian statement the next day says the Security Council had been duty bound to condemn Iraq's use of chemical weapons and that its 'failure to carry out its duty in this respect makes it obvious more than ever that the superpowers are involved in supplying Iraq with chemical weapons'.[5] Press reports suggest 'Iraq's allies on the council lobbied successfully' against a resolution which would have had 'more impact by explicitly condemning Iraq' and that only four council members were in favour of a resolution — the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan and the UK.[6]

The text of the statement derives from a resolution proposed by the Netherlands. An official from the Dutch mission to the UN is reported as telling the US mission that his delegation has instructions to support a draft resolution, but that speed is of the essence before the Ukrainian SSR assumes the Council presidency and tries to sidetrack the issue.[7] [Note: it is not clear what is driving the Netherlands interest in the subject, although it may be connected with recent unpublished information suggesting chemical exports by Dutch companies to Iraq [see 23 March].]

An internal UK paper describes the text as a 'Presidential statement which, being couched in the language of a Resolution, will constitute a "decision" of the Council'[8] and notes 'Because the Resolution [*sic*] does not explicitly condemn Iraq, it will probably come as a welcome relief to the Iraqi government. On the other hand, it will no doubt cause irritation to the Iranians, who are likely to renew their pressure on us for a statement which explicitly condemns Iraq for using chemical weapons.'[9]

[Note: the non-permanent members of the Council at this time are Egypt, India, Malta, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru (President), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Upper Volta and Zimbabwe.]

[1] Note by the President of the Security Council dated 30 March 1984, UN document S/16454, 30 March 1984, 2 pp. The record of the statement being read out in the Council chamber appears in S/PV.2524, 30 March 1984.

[2] For example: [no author listed], 'UN condemnation - Iraq not mentioned', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 31 March 1984, p 34.

[3] Dan Oberdorfer, 'U.S. Curbs chemicals to Iran, Iraq', *Washington Post*, 31 March 1984, p 1.

[4] 'UN Council Set to Condemn Chemical Arms Use in Iran-Iraq War', Associated Press, 30 March 1984.

[5] Tehran Home Service, 2030 GMT 31 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Statement on UN View of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 2 April 1984, ME/7607/A/1.

[6] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), *The Times* (London), 31 March 1984, p. 6.

[7] US Mission to the United Nations in New York, cable to US Secretary of State, 'UN report on chemical weapons use in Iran/Iraq war: consideration in security council', 28 March 1984, as posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

[8] DK Haskell (Middle East Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office), confidential memorandum, 'Iran/Iraq: Use Of Chemical Weapons: Possible Press Statement', 30 March 1984, paragraph 3. This document remains private until released with other evidence

presented to the Scott Inquiry in 1996, carrying inquiry reference mark FCO/123.2.122.

[9] Scott FCO/123.2.122, paragraph 4.

19850316

**16 March 1985** At 0830 and 0835 (local time), Iraqi forces drop 'at least six large capsules' on an Iranian position east of Majnoon Island, so Iran claims. The allegations are contained in a letter to the UN Secretary-General from the Iranian Permanent Representative which says that 'upon the impact of the capsules, a greyish ascended into the air' and that Iranian experts 'believe that cyanide, phosphorous and mustard gases have been used'.[1] Ambassador Said Rajaie-Khorassani calls on the Secretary-General to 'promptly consider appropriate measures to terminate peacefully the Iraqi repeated use of chemical weapons in the war'.

The letter states this 'chemical attack had been preceded by four others since 11 March'.

[1] Letter dated 20 March 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/17046 and A/40/189, 21 March 1985; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran says Iraq used poison gas at least five times', United Press International, 22 March 1985.

19850401

**1 April 1985** Dr Manuel Dominguez, one of the experts previously appointed by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to investigate allegations of use of chemical weapons in Iran [see 26 March 1984], examines Iranian patients hospitalized in Europe [see 28 March]. He is acting at the request of the Secretary-General. He visits three patients in Bijloke Hospital in Ghent, Belgium; six patients in Elisabeth-Krankenhaus in Recklinghausen, Federal Republic of Germany; and six patients in the St. John-St. Elizabeth and Wellington hospitals in London, United Kingdom. He completes his examinations on 5 April and forwards a report to the Secretary-General.[1]

[1] Letter Dated 17 April 1985 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN document S/17127, 24 April 1985; see also: [no author listed], 'Medical expert reports use of chemical weapons in Iran-Iraq war', *UN Chronicle*, May 1985, p 24; [no author listed] (from New York), 'UN report identifies poison gas', *The Guardian*, 20 April 1985.

19850417

**17 April 1985** Iraq shells the city of Khorranshahr with a 'chemical cannon-ball', so claims Iran's UN representative Said Rajaie Khorassani. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General some days later, he says that this attack causes eye and throat irritation in a number of people.[1]

[1] Letter dated 25 April 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/17129, 25 April 1985.

19850424

**24 April 1985** The report of Dr Manuel Dominguez, the medical specialist requested by the UN Secretary-General to examine Iranian patients hospitalized in Europe, is published [see 1 April].

Dr Dominguez reports four conclusions: 'Chemical weapons were used during March 1985 in the war between Iran and Iraq', 'Yperite [mustard gas] was used, affecting Iranian soldiers', 'The attacks were made by means of bombs dropped from aircraft, according to the statements of most patients', and 'It is possible that hydrocyanic gas was used, alone or in combination with yperite'.[1]

A supplementary report is also provided by Dr Dominguez which conveys the results of some laboratory analyses of medical samples taken from the patients. These indicate the patients may have been exposed to an 'organophosphorated agent'. Dr Dominguez writes this agent 'may have been Tabun, which would explain the presence of cyanide in some organic samples, for the explosion of bombs containing Tabun

may cause that substance to decompose and produce hydrocyanide.’[2]

[1] *Letter Dated 17 April 1985 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, UN document S/17127, 24 April 1985

[2] *Letter Dated 17 April 1985 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, UN document S/17127/Add.1, 30 April 1985

19850425

**25 April 1985** The President of the UN Security Council, Javier Arias Stella of Peru reads a statement on behalf of the Council that they are ‘appalled that chemical weapons have been used against Iranian soldiers’ during March, as concluded in the report of the medical specialist [see 24 April]. The Council members ‘strongly condemn renewed use of chemical weapons in the conflict and any possible future use of such weapons’.[1] As with the previous statement [see 30 March 1984] the Security Council does not explicitly name Iraq as using chemical weapons.

The following day, the Secretary-General is requested by the President of the Security Council to examine the feasibility of establishing arrangements to conduct prompt investigation of any further allegations of the use of chemical weapons.[2]

[*Note: the non-permanent members of the Council at this time are Australia, Burkina Faso, Denmark, Egypt, India, Madagascar, Peru, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.*]

[1] Note by the President of the Security Council, UN document S/17130, 25 April 1985. The proceedings of the meeting are reproduced in UN document S/PV.2576, 25 April 1985.

[2] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986.

19850426

**26 April 1985** Iran’s Majlis Speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani calls the recent UN Security Council statement [see 25 April] condemning chemical weapons ‘a positive move’. However, it contains ‘an unacceptable weakness’ by not explicitly naming Iraq as the state using chemical weapons. ‘Now that you are condemning this act, and you know Iraq is responsible, why do you act like a coward and conservative? Speak clearly’. Rafsanjani says that Iran ‘would start talks on the war with the UN if the organization names Iraq as the aggressor and violator of various international laws’.[1]

[1] [No author listed] (from Nicosia), ‘Iran Says UN Chemical Condemnation Positive but Weak’, Associated Press, 26 August 1985.

19850514

**H 14 May 1985** [UNSG tells UNSC President that he will use the earlier team of experts if any further investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons are required, but decides not to carry out any further inspections at the present time.]

19851102

**2 November 1985** Iraq shells Minou Island, near the city of Khorramshahr, with ‘chemical cannon balls’, so claims Iran’s UN representative Said Rajaie Khorassani. Writing to the UN Secretary-General, he says that this attack results in eight people being seriously injured.[1]

Iraq immediately issues a denial, stating ‘the official spokesman in Baghdad firmly rejected the Iranian allegations that Iranian troops had been killed by the action of chemical artillery. The spokesman went on to say that the purpose of these mendacious allegations is to justify the continuing Iranian shelling of Iraqi border towns’.[2] Iran responds: ‘In my letter of 4 November, I reported the severe INJURY, not the killing, of eight people as a result of the Iraqi chemical shelling of Minou Island on 2 November 1985. Contrary to the said misleading letter of the Iraqi representative, no Iranian

authority has announced, in this connection, the killing of Iranian troops by the action of Iraqi chemical artillery shells’. The Iranian representative goes on: ‘this sort of distortion and deceitful misrepresentation of the facts concerning the case of the Iraqi use of chemical weapons is a desperate though naive attempt by the Iraqi regime to dilute the matter and to divert the attention of the international community from their outright violations of all the generally accepted principles of international law, especially the 1925 Geneva Protocol’.[3]

[*Note: the type of language used in this exchange is typical of the phraseology used in claims and counter-claims of the period.*]

[1] *Letter dated 4 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/17606-A/40/849, 4 November 1985.

[2] *Letter dated 6 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/17611, 6 November 1985.

[3] *Letter dated 11 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/17623-A/40/873, 11 November 1985.

19860224

**24 February 1986** The UN Security Council adopts unanimously resolution 582 on the Iran–Iraq War which calls for both countries ‘to observe an immediate cease-fire’. The resolution ‘deplores ... the use of chemical weapons contrary to the obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol’.[1] The resolution makes no distinction in any paragraph between the two countries, applying all provisions to both.

Immediately upon the adoption by of this resolution, the UN Secretary-General gives instructions for an investigation mission to assemble in Vienna and proceed without further delay to Iran. At the same time he reiterates to the Government of Iraq his readiness to instruct the mission to visit Iraq also, to investigate Iraq’s allegations should the Government so request while the mission was still in the area.[3]

Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani announces the start of a new offensive in northern Iraq to protest at what he describes as an ‘ineffective and shallow’ resolution. Iran had boycotted the deliberations leading up to the resolution [see 18 February], and immediately condemns it for not naming Iraq explicitly for beginning the war or using chemical weapons.[3]

[1] Security Council resolution 582, 24 February 1986.

[2] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986.

[3] Nick Ludington (from New York), ‘Iran Rejects Cease-Fire Call Passed By Security Council’, Associated Press, 24 February 1986; Nick Ludington (from New York), ‘Security Council Asks Cease-fire; Iran Announces Attack in Protest’, Associated Press, 25 February 1986.

19860225

**H 25 February 1986** [Iran letter to UNSG, S/17864]

19860227

**27 February 1986** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati calls for a war crimes tribunal to be established to prosecute Iraq for the use of chemical warfare and other alleged violations of international law. Addressing the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva he says ‘We want these criminals punished as were those who appeared before the Nuremburg court’.[1]

[1] [No author listed] (from Tehran), ‘UN Team Investigates Iran’s Chemical War Allegations’ / ‘Accusation against Iraq in Gulf War’, *The Guardian* (London), 28 February 1986.

19860227

**27 February 1986** The United Nations team [see 24 February] arrives in Tehran to investigate Iranian accusations of Iraqi chemical weapons attacks. The team comprises — Dr. Gustav Andersson, a senior research chemist at the National Defense Research Institute in Sweden; Dr. Manuel Dominguez, an army colonel and professor of preventive medicine in Spain; Dr. Peter Dunn, a scientist at the Materials Laboratory in Australia's Defense Department, and Col. Ulrich Imobersteg, Chief of Chemical Weapons Defense of the Swiss Army.[1]

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986.

19860305

**H 5 March 1986** [Iraq letter to UNSG, S/17897]

19860312

**12 March 1986** The experts on a UN mission to investigate allegations of Iraqi chemical weapons attacks in Iran [see 24 and 27 February] 'unanimously conclude that: (a) On many occasions, Iraqi forces have used chemical weapons against Iranian forces; (b) The agent used has mainly been mustard gas although on some occasions nerve gas was also employed'. [1]

The experts also conclude: 'that chemical weapons have been used in the Abadan area against Iranian positions by Iraqi forces' and 'The extent to which mustard gas was used could not be determined within the time and resources available to us. However, from the over 700 casualties actually seen in Tehran and Ahvaz it is our impression that the use of chemical weapons in 1986 appears to be more extensive than in 1984'. [1] The report is published two days later.

This is the third UN report on chemical weapons usage in the Iran–Iraq War [see 26 March 1984 and 24 April 1985] and the first that specifically names Iraq as the user.

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986; Peter Dunn, 'The Chemical War: Iran Revisited—1986; The Second United Nations Mission to Iran—A First-Person Account from the Front', *NBC Defense and Technology International*, June 1986, p. 39.

19860314

**Q 14 March 1986** The UN report confirming Iraqi use of chemical weapons 'on many occasions' is published [see 12 March]. [1]

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has made repeated appeals for respect for the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning chemical warfare, says he condemns the use of such weapons 'wherever and whenever they occur.' [2]

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986.

[2] Elaine Sciolino (from UN New York), 'Iraq Cited on Chemical Arms', *New York Times*, 15 March 1986, section 1, p. 2.

19860321

**Q 21 March 1986** UN Security Council issues a statement strongly condemning the continued use of chemical weapons by Iraq following consideration of the report of the latest investigation mission to Iran [see 14 March]. [*\*S/17932, was there a draft resolution??\**]

[Note: Just as the report under consideration was the first to specifically name Iraq as the user of chemical warfare, this statement is the first occasion the Security Council collectively names Iraq in this context.]

19860322

**22 March 1986** The previous day's Security Council statement prompts reactions.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry demands a formal resolution from the UN Security Council condemning Iraqi use of chemical weapons. [1] Mohsen Rafiq-Dust, Minister of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), speaks of extensive use of chemical weapons that Iraq has employed as a means of disrupting Iran's logistical support lines. He claims Iraq's use of over 1000 bombs and 6000 artillery shells (amounting to more than 8000 litres of various chemicals) would have been more than enough to thoroughly contaminate an area twice the size as the one currently occupied by Iran. He says that Iran was able to mitigate the effects of the weapons through protective gear and decontamination equipment. [2] No basis for this calculation is reported, however.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz writes to the Security Council president, Danish ambassador Ole Bierring, saying that the Security Council statement did not truly reflect reality when calling on both sides to respect the territorial integrity of all states. 'This call should have been directed to the party (Iran) which threatens other states and insists on war'. [3] No reference to the use of chemical weapons is included, however.

[1] [No author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Urges UN to Stop Iraq from Using Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 23 March 1986, ref 032320.

[2] Tehran Home Service, 0430 GMT 23 March 1986, as reported in 'Iranian Revolution Guards Corps Minister Discusses War with Iraq', BBC-SWB, 25 March, 1986, ME/8216/A/1.

[3] Liz Thurgood, 'Iran Doctor Tells of Mustard Gas Attack', *The Guardian* (London), 25 March 1986.

19860814

**14 August 1986** In Geneva, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati claims that Iraq has used mustard gas on five occasions since the UN Security Council statement of 21 March, and calls on the Conference on Disarmament to open an investigation into which countries supplied Iraq with its chemical weapons capabilities, renew its condemnation of all use of chemical weapons, ban the export of CW-related chemicals and equipment, and immediately send investigating teams to Iran when Iran requests them. He complains that although many European countries have export controls, there is no thorough administration to force export compliance — if Iraq could procure and produce chemical weapons any country could do so. He urges Iraq to officially renounce further use of chemical weapons. If Iraq continues to use chemical weapons, Iran, Velayati states, reserves the right to defend itself. [1]

[1] IRNA (from Geneva), 1753 GMT 14 August 1986, as reported in 'Iran's Velayati Condemns Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 16 August 1986, ME/8339/A/1; Alan McGregor, 'Iranian Plea on Chemical Arms, Gulf War', *The Times* (London), 15 August 1986; [No author listed] (from Geneva), 'Around the World; 16 on Iranian Tanker Reported Killed by Raid', *New York Times*, 15 August 1986, p. A7.

19860829

**Q 29 August 1986** At the United Nations in New York, the President of the Security Council writes to the Secretary-General regarding the Iran–Iraq war: 'The members of the Council reiterate the endorsement of the Council for your continuing efforts with both sides to work towards the ending of the conflict and, until this is achieved, to mitigate its effects on the basis of humanitarian considerations. In this context, they wish to commend all efforts to prevent the use of chemical weapons and to halt attacks on civilian areas'. The letter concludes: 'The members of the Council wish to convey to you their appreciation of your statement of 14 August 1986 [*\*GET!!\**] and wish to assure you of their continued support'. [1]

[1] Letter dated 29 August 1986 from President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/18305, dated 29 August 1986.

19860910

**H 10 September 1986** [Velayati writes to UNSG re chemical weapons attacks — S/18334][1]

[1] Samir F Ghattas (from Baghdad), 'Iraq Says It Hit Refinery, Tanker', Associated Press, 10 September 1986.

19861008

**Q 8 October 1986** The UN Security Council adopts unanimously resolution 588 on the Iran–Iraq War which calls for both countries 'to implement fully and without delay resolution 582' [see 24 February]. The resolution requests the UN Secretary-General 'to intensify his efforts with the parties to give effect to the above mentioned resolution and to report to the Council no later than 30 November 1986.' [1] *[\*Did UNSG report??\*]*

[1] Security Council resolution 588, 8 October 1986.

19861227

**27 December 1986** Iran urges the UN to take 'more serious effective measures' against Iraq to prevent them from using chemical weapons.[1] Iran claims several of its soldiers were wounded from recent Iraqi chemical weapons attacks [see 26 December]. Iran protests to the UN Secretary-General.[2]

[1] Liz Thurgood, 'Baghdad Dissidents Join Forces / Iraqi Opposition Leaders Meet in Iranian Capital Tehran', *The Guardian* (London), 29 December 1986.

[2] IRNA, 27 December 1986, as reported in 'Iraq Reports Defeat of Iranian Offensive on Southern Front', BBC-SWB, 29 December 1986, ME/8451/i.

19870104

**4 January 1987** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati writes to UN Secretary-General Javier de Cuellar, asking that the United Nations dispatch a team of experts to investigate the latest Iranian allegations of Iraqi use of chemical weapons.[1]

[1] [No author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Urges UN Measures against Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 4 January 1987, ref 0104103.

19870106

**6 January 1987** The UN Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, issues a statement expressing 'his dismay at violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the use of chemical weapons. The most recent accusation by Iran [see 4 January] that Iraq again has used these weapons must be seen in the context of the findings of previous on-site investigations, notably that of March 1986 [see 14 March 1986], which confirmed that chemical weapons on many occasions have been used by Iraqi forces against Iranian forces'. [1]

[1] The full text of the Secretary-General's statement is printed in *La Semaine Internationale* (Geneva: UN Information Service) SI/O2/87, p 2.

198702xx

**H XX February 1987** [UN Secretary-General statement condemning Iraqi use of CW, referred to in CD/740\*, 24 February 1987]

19870206

**H 6 February 1987** [Iran writes to UNSG claiming attacks on 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29 January — S/18675]

19870212

**12 February 1987** In Geneva, the Permanent Representative of Iran writes to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament to 'earnestly demand' that the CD 'take some effective steps stop the Iraqi use of chemical weapons by strongly condemning such inhumane acts'. The letter alleges Iraq used chemical weapons 'over a very wide area on 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 28, 29, 30 and 31 January

as well as on 6 February 1987, as the result of which large numbers of people were subjected to such brutal inhumane deeds'.

The letter is later circulated as an official document of the CD.[1]

[1] 'Letter Addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 12 February 1987', CD/740\*, 24 February 1987.

19870307

**7 March 1987** Iraqi gunners 'fire chemical shells containing toxic gas' at Iranian positions near Basra, so IRNA reports. The agency says unspecified 'timely countermeasures' taken by the Iranians neutralize the effects of the chemical weapons, but gives no details except to say three Iranian soldiers suffered superficial wounds in the attack.[1]

A month later, the following details are given in a letter from Iran to the UN Secretary-General: 'The chemical agent was shelled at the Iranian position at 0145 hours on 7 March 1987 in the Karbala 5 operation theatre, and injured three Muslim combatants'. [2]

[1] [No author listed] (from Nicosia), 'Iran Says it Repulsed Iraqi Mountain Attack', Associated Press, 9 March 1987.

[2] Letter dated 7 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/18788, 8 April 1987.

19870409

**9 April 1987** The Foreign Minister of Iran, Dr Ali Akbar Velayati, addresses the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. He proposes that 'all we signatories to [the 1925 Geneva] Protocol, through one international announcement, re-express our commitments to this Protocol, as well as our determination to prevent any further violation of it by all international ways and means'. He says that the latest Iraqi chemical weapons attack had occurred on 19 March (later amended to 9 April[1]). He circulates a list of past instances.[2] The list states that Iraq has used CW weapons on more than 196 occasions, killing more than 262 people and injuring 27 309.

[1] Statement of Iranian delegate Mashhadi to the CD in plenary session, CD/PV.406, pp 30-32.

[2] Statement of Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to the CD in plenary session, 9 April 1987, CD/PV.404, pp 5-8.

19870411

**11 April 1987** Iraq carries out two aerial attacks against the Department of Water in Khorramshahr, killing or wounding 20 civil servants, so Iran claims in a letter to the UN Secretary-General. The letter also claims that these are in addition to other attacks that had started the previous day in which Iraq used mustard in 2 artillery shells and 40 rockets, killing or wounding 120 people.[1] IRNA reports attacks on the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, and on several villages in Khuzestan province, with chemical bombs delivered from aircraft. The agency claims that anti-chemical units are deployed to neutralize the weapons.[2] Other reporting lists the IRNA claims as relating to the 'Nim Istgah-e-Navad sector in the southern warfront'. [3]

A second letter from Iran to the UN Secretary-General claims Iraq has 'repeatedly resorted to chemical warfare on a very large scale on 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 April 1987. Residential areas were the main target of these recent Iraqi chemical attacks, as a result of which in the cities of Abadan, Khorramshahr and the village of Mared at least 100 civilians were injured by chemical agents.' The letter calls for 'a mandatory embargo on the export to Iraq of chemical agents and the technology necessary for the production of these illegal weapons' and calls on the Secretary-General 'to dispatch immediately a United Nations team to investigate the results of the most recent chemical attacks'. [4]

Iran later claims that these attacks on Khorramshahr result in a death toll of 200 with over 3000 wounded.[5]

[1] *Letter dated 13 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18799-A/42/219, 13 April 1987.

[2] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iranian Planes Raid Iraqi Positions Near Basra', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 11 April 1987, ref 0411020; [no author listed] (from Tehran), Agence France Presse, as in: 'Gulf War enemies both claim successes', *Independent (London)*, 11 April 1987, p 6.

[3] [No author listed] (from Nicosia), 'Iran Appeals for UN Observers to Investigate Chemical Weapons Claims', Associated Press, 13 April 1987.

[4] *Letter dated 13 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18800-A/42/220, 13 April 1987. See also *Letter dated 28 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18829-A/42/257, 28 April 1987.

[5] Tyler Marshall (from Fish Canal, Iranian-Occupied Iraq), 'Craters, barbed wire and parapets / Ferocity of Iran-Iraq War recalls trenches of WW I', *Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 1987, p. 1.

19870414

**14 April 1987** Iraq lodges a complaint with the UN Secretary-General alleging Iranian use of phosgene against Iraqi troops on the southern front the previous weekend [see 11 April], killing 9 and injuring 376.[1] The charge is denied by the Iranian War Information Headquarters, whose spokesman says that the allegation is aimed at covering-up Iraq's extensive chemical weapons operations in the same region.[2] A subsequent statement from the War Information Headquarters speaks of atmospheric conditions in some quarters having caused phosgene used by the Iraqis to have seeped back into their own positions.[3]

[1] *Letter dated 15 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18806, 15 April 1987. A letter dated 14 April 1987 from Tariq Aziz is annexed herein. See also: [no author listed], 'Iran uses phosgene, Iraq claims', *Washington Times*, 17 April 1987, p 6.

[2] IRNA (in English) (from Tehran), 0943 GMT 17 April 1987, as reported in FBIS-SA of 17 April 1987, p 110.

[3] Tehran domestic service, 1030 GMT 21 April 1987, as reported in FBIS-ME, 22 April 1987, p 12.

19870415

**15 April 1987** Iraqi aircraft carry out attacks with chemical weapons at 1900 hours in the Kooh-E-Noori area in the Sardasht operational theatre, according to information provided by Iranian authorities to the UN Secretary-General.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 28 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18829-A/42/257, 28 April 1987

19870416

**16 April 1987** Iraq drops 'chemical bombs' on the Iranian villages of Kandar and Aloom, described as being closed to the border with Iraq 'in the vicinity of the city of Baneh', according to a letter from Iran to the UN Secretary-General. Ten villagers are said to be injured.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 16 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18809, 16 April 1987.

19870418

**18 April 1987** Iran asks the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme to send a delegation to investigate Iraqi use of chemical weapons, 'which have a very destructive and dangerous impact on the environment and ecology systems'. [1]

[1] Tehran domestic service, 1030 GMT 18 April 1987, as reported in FBIS-SA, 20 April 1987, p 12.

19870420

**20 April 1987** A UN official announces the decision of the UN Secretary-General to send an investigating team to both

Iraq and to Iran; the same four experts as in the previous investigations [see 14 March 1986] would be dispatched — Dr Gustav Andersson (Sweden), Col Dr Manuel Dominguez (Spain), Dr Peter Dunn (Australia) and Col Ulrich Imobersteg (Switzerland). The four experts are said to have already gathered in Frankfurt ready to travel to the region as soon as assurances for the safety of the team have been received from both sides in the Iran-Iraq War.[1] The specialists are once again accompanied by Iqbal Riza from the UN Secretariat.

Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, announcing the involvement of Peter Dunn, says that the Australian government is appalled by reports that chemical weapons may again have been used in the Gulf War and therefore readily agrees to make Dunn available to take part in the new investigation. Hayden says his government believes there is a need for a continued effort on the part of the international community to ensure that all reports of chemical warfare are promptly and thoroughly investigated.[2]

[1] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'U.N. to investigate Gulf War', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 20 April 1987, ref 0420067.

[2] [no author listed] (from Canberra), 'Australia joins UN chemical weapons investigations', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 21 April 1987, ref 0421152.

19870421

**21 April 1987** Iraqi planes drop chemical bombs in the Cham-Para operational theatre in the Baneh region (on the northwestern front) at 0500 and 1000 GMT, wounding 12 Iranians, so IRNA reports.[1]

Within a week, Iranian authorities tell the UN Secretary-General that Iraqi forces 'deployed chemical weapons in the Baneh and Sardasht areas, injuring 60 people'. [2]

[1] IRNA, 1957 GMT 22 April 1987, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 25 April 1987, ME/8551/A/1.

[2] *Letter dated 27 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18825-A/42/253, 27 April 1987.

19870421

**Q21 April 1987** Iran's Representative to the United Nations writes to the Secretary-General suggesting Iraqi chemical weapon production facilities 'present a grave threat to the authority and integrity of the rules of international law' and that, therefore, 'the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran deems it necessary to call on the United Nations expert team — which for the first time has been given the opportunity to visit Iraq [*\*when did IQ agree access??\**] — to inspect these facilities. The provision of the necessary mandate to the expert team to visit and prepare a report on such facilities would illustrate your commitment to deal effectively with the problem at its foundations in order to prevent further use of these illegal weapons'. The Iranian Government offers to provide the team with the locations of the relevant facilities.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 21 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18819-A/42/237, 21 April 1987.

19870422

**22 April 1987** Iraqi aircraft carry out attacks with chemical weapons at 1900 hours in Baneh and surrounding villages, according to information provided by Iranian authorities to the UN Secretary-General.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 28 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18829-A/42/257, 28 April 1987.

19870506

**6 May 1987** The UN Secretary-General receives the report of the mission he had dispatched [see 20 April] to both Iraq and Iran to investigate the complaints of chemical weapons

which each had lodged against the other [see 11 and 14 April].[1] The report confirms the use by Iraq of CW agents against Iranian civilians as well as soldiers and that Iraqi military personnel, too, had displayed injuries caused by CW agents, but the evidence regarding the source of those injuries was inconclusive.

In their letter of transmittal, the team members recount: 'Although the number of chemical casualties we saw in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the severity of their injuries was considerably less than seen by us in 1986, we were very disturbed to find that there now have been numerous civilian casualties as a result of attacks by mustard gas. In a hospital in Tehran we saw the effects of mustard gas on a peasant family, particularly a mother and her two small daughters aged two and four years. We had the distressing experience of witnessing the suffering of the four-year-old child less than two hours before her death. In addition, we saw the very damaging effects of mustard gas on the young mother, who was four months pregnant'.

Pleading for everything possible to be done to stop the use of chemical weapons in the war, the experts note: 'It is vital to realize that the continued use of chemical weapons in the present conflict increases the risk of their use in future conflicts'. They also note that the team members have now conducted three missions to the Islamic Republic of Iran and one to Iraq and: 'We all firmly believe that, at the specialist level, we have done all that we can to identify the types of chemicals and chemical weapons being used in the Iran-Iraq conflict. If, in the future, a further mission is requested, then we will of course all be ready to respond. However, we now feel that technically there is little more that we can do that is likely to assist the United Nations in its efforts to prevent the use of chemical weapons in the present conflict'.

The report of the investigation team concludes: '(a) There has been repeated use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces by Iraqi forces, employing aerial bombs and very probably rockets. The chemical agents used are mustard gas (yperite) and probably, on some occasions, nerve agents; (b) A new dimension is that civilians in Iran also have been injured by chemical weapons; (c) Iraqi military personnel have sustained injuries from chemical warfare agents, which are mustard gas (yperite) and a pulmonary irritant, possibly phosgene'.

The report is circulated to the members of the Council on 8 May and published on 13 May.

[Note: rumours circulate that this investigation mission encountered Iraqi Kurds suffering from injuries caused by attacks by Iraqi armed forces use of chemical weapons [see 16 April], but this was considered to be outside the remit of the team to include in this report. However, the information is said to have been conveyed to the office of the Secretary-General by other means.]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/18852, 8 May 1987 and Corr.1, 26 May 1987; and, as an Addendum, 'Appendix III. Summary report on patients examined by the medical specialist...', UN doc S/18852/Add.1, 18 May 1987.

19870513

**13 May 1987** The report of the latest UN Secretary-General's investigation into allegations of use of chemical weapons is made public [see 6 May].

The Secretary-General's introduction to the report includes: 'In transmitting the report of the mission of specialists ... to the Security Council, the Secretary-General cannot but express his deep dismay at the mission's conclusions about the continued use of chemical weapons in the conflict between Iran and Iraq. The specialists' findings

that chemical weapons were again used against Iranian forces by Iraqi forces, also causing injuries to civilians in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and that now also Iraqi forces have sustained injuries from chemical weapons must add new urgency to the grave concerns of the international community. The fact that the use of chemical weapons continues despite repeated appeals by the Security Council and the Secretary-General gives rise to the fear that such use could escalate and seriously undermine the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which has heretofore been considered one of the most worthy and successful attempts by the international community to mitigate the effects of war'.[1]

The publication of the report receives considerable press coverage.[2]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/18852, 8 May 1987.

[2] For example: [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Team Says Poison Gas Still Used in Iran-Iraq War', Associated Press, 13 May 1987; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'U.N. chief urges to end use of chemical weapons in Gulf War', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 16 May 1987, ref 0513060; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iraq Chemical War Cited In UN', *New York Times*, 14 May 1987, p. A14; [no author listed], 'Iraq Used Chemical Weapons', *Financial Times* (London), 14 May 1987, p. 14.

19870514

**14 May 1987** The UN Security Council, acting on the report of the Secretary-General's investigatory mission to Iran and Iraq [see 13 May], issues a condemnation of the continued use of chemical weapons.[1] The key paragraph of the statement reads: 'Deeply dismayed by the unanimous conclusions of the specialists that there has been repeated use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces by Iraqi forces, that civilians in Iran also have been injured by chemical weapons, and that Iraqi military personnel have sustained injuries from chemical warfare agents, the members of the Council again strongly condemn the repeated use of chemical weapons in open violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, in which the use of chemical weapons in war is clearly prohibited'.

Two days later, the Iranian Foreign Ministry expresses regret that the Security Council issued a statement lacking 'executive teeth'.[2]

The Iraqi representative to the UN writes to the Secretary-General: 'The Council states that "Iraqi military personnel have sustained injuries from chemical warfare agents", without actually affirming that Iran has resorted to the use of chemical weapons of which Iraqi forces have been the victims'. The letter claims that this wording — which appears both in the mission's report and the Security Council statement — amounts to a 'serious shortcoming on the part of the mission'.[3]

[1] *Note by the President of the Security Council*, UN document S/18863, 14 May 1987.

[2] [No author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Blasts UN Security Council for its Weak Blame on Iraq', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 16 May 1987, ref 0516029.

[3] *Letter dated 18 May 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18870, 18 May 1987.

19870521

**21 May 1987** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati writes to the UN Secretary-General, saying: 'It is imperative that, before Iraq again resorts to chemical weapons, this critical matter be brought to the attention of the Security Council and that the Secretary-General, with the Council's endorsement, renew his appeal of 29 June 1984 [\*CHECK\*] which is yet to be answered by Iraq. He might as well call on all States and concerned international organizations to make concerted efforts in order to persuade the Iraqi regime to

undertake not to use chemical weapons. Moreover, all States should be called upon to refrain from exporting various chemicals which can be converted to chemical weapons'.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 21 May 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18878, 26 May 1987.

19870526-27

**26–27 May 1987** At the Holmenkollen Symposium on the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in Oslo, the Dutch ambassador to the CD, Robert van Schaik, says: 'The use of chemical weapons, as has recently again been reported in the Iraq–Iran war, is not a stroke of bad luck. The recent report [see 13 May] of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General of the UN to investigate allegations on the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between Iran and Iraq is a sign on the wall. This time the mission did not only, as in 1984 [see 26 March 1984], 1985 [see 24 April 1985] and 1986 [see 14 March 1986], report on the continued use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi forces, it also reported on civil victims as well as on Iraqi forces having suffered sustained injuries from chemical warfare agents. This, as the report says, "adds new urgency to the grave concern of the international community".'[1]

[1] Statement by Amb. Robert J van Schaik, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office in Geneva and Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament.

19870529

**Q 29 May 1987** Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Velayati states in a letter to UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that the UN should ask all countries should be asked not to export various chemicals which could be converted to chemical weapons.[1] [*\*Recast ... Primary source??\**]

[1] [No author listed] (from UN New York), 'News in Brief from UN Headquarters', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 29 May 1987, ref 0529128.

19870626

**26 June 1987** Iraqi aircraft drop 'chemical bombs' in Iranian-occupied north-eastern Iraq, so IRNA claims. The agency says the attacks result in 'minimum casualties' because Iranian chemical warfare squads move in quickly to decontaminate affected sectors.[1] No details of location are given.

A few days later, Iran informs the UN Secretary-General: 'Chemical rockets fired from helicopters were used to deliver suffocating and nerve gases, which resulted in injury to mere than 60 people'.[2]

[1] Ed Blanche (from Nicosia), 'Iraq Says Three Iranian Assaults Repulsed', Associated Press, 27 June 1987.

[2] *Letter dated 29 June 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18952–A/42/370, 29 June 1987.

19870628

**28 June 1987** Iraq conducts chemical weapons air-raids on the northern border town of Sardasht. Iranian sources initially claim that two raids take place.[1] Further raids take place the following day.[2] Iran initially claims 10 dead and 650 injured.[3] Within 24 hours, this becomes 12 dead and 650 seriously injured out of a total of 2000 claimed casualties.[4] Iran calls for the 'immediate dispatch' of a UN investigation.[5]

Foreign journalists visit and report.[6] Sardasht casualties are sent for treatment to Brussels, Madrid, Rome and Vienna.[7] Photographs of casualties are circulated as a UN document at Iranian request.[8] A week later, the death toll has climbed to 35, according to an official from Azarbaijan province.[9] By the end of July, Iran claims 60 of the 2000

casualties from these attacks have died.[10] Within a year, Iran claims 8129 casualties have been caused by these attacks.[11]

In a description of these attacks to the CD, the Foreign Minister of Iran says 'it was not the first time that civilian areas and residential quarters were targets of chemical attack. But this was the first time that a city in its totality was poisoned by the Iraqi forces. The use of chemical arms was so vast that even several days later ... the afflicted areas were still highly contaminated.'[12]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1604 GMT 28 June 1987, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 2 July 1987, ME/8609/A/1.

[2] *Letter dated 29 June 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18955–A/42/373, 30 June 1987.

[3] *Letter dated 29 June 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18953–A/42/371, 29 June 1987; [no author listed] (from Nicosia), 'Iran Claims 10 Civilians Killed, 650 Injured In Gas Attacks', Associated Press, 28 June 1987.

[4] *Letter dated 30 June 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18956–A/42/375, 30 June 1987; Gordon Barthos, 'Iraqis used chemical weapons on civilians, Iran says', *Toronto Star*, 3 July 1987, p A10.

[5] *Letter dated 29 June 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18953–A/42/371, 29 June 1987.

[6] Andrew Alexander (from Tabriz), 'Iraq continues chemical war against Iran; UN looks other way', *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 July 1987, p 22.

[7] [no author listed], Associated Press, as in: 'Chemical claim', *Guardian* (London), 15 July 1987, p 6; *Letter dated 16 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18984–A/42/405, 16 July 1987; *Letter dated 17 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18986–A/42/408, 17 July 1987.

[8] *Letter dated 29 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19006–A/42/426, 29 July 1987.

[9] [No author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Says, 35 People Killed by Iraqi Chemical Bomb', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 5 July 1987, ref 0705004; *Letter dated 6 July 1987 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/18966–A/42/382, 6 July 1987.

[10] *Letter dated 29 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19006–A/42/426, 29 July 1987.

[11] *Letter Dated 11 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran Addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament*, Conference on Disarmament Document CD/827, 12 April 1988.

[12] Statement of Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to the Conference on Disarmament in plenary session, 28 July 1987, CD document CD/PV.425, pp 2–6.

19870707

**7 July 1987** A UN team stationed in Tehran, but not one composed of chemical weapons specialists visits the Iranian border town of Sardasht, the site of Iraqi chemical weapons air-raids 9 days previously [see 28 June], and, according to the Iranian Foreign Minister 5 weeks later, prepares an informal report which, however, is not published.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 10 August 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document A/42/467–S/19029, 10 August 1987.

19870720

**H 20 July 1987** [UNSC adopts resolution 598, calling for a ceasefire and 'Deploring ... in particular, the use of chemical weapons contrary to obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol'. Draft circulated as S/18983.]

19870728

**28 July 1987** The Foreign Minister of Iran addresses the CD. He speaks at length of the failure of the international community to uphold the authority of the Geneva Protocol, asking what this implies for the international arrangements needed to assure compliance with the future Chemical Weapons Convention. He says the 'name of Sardasht [see 28 June] should castigate the consciousness of mankind along with the names of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the first city in history whose inhabitants were massacred by poisonous gases'. And he makes this allegation: 'the United States, which had previously condemned the use of chemical weapons by Iraq, has now gone so far in supporting Iraq that it even prevents the [UN Security] Council from discussing the subject and receiving the technical report [see 7 July] on the genocide of the people of Sardasht'. [1]

[1] Statement of Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to the CD in plenary session, 28 July 1987, CD/PV.425, pp 2-6.

19870801

**H 1 August 1987** [IR physicians letter – S/19019]

19871008

**8 October 1987** A large-scale Iraqi chemical bombardment of the Iranian border town of Sumar takes place at 10.05 and 10.15 local time according to a complaint made by the Iranian government to the UN Secretary-General the following day. The letter of complaint also calls for an investigation of the charges by UN experts. [1] Iranian radio announces that the attacks result in 'the martyrdom of 100 people' and the wounding of many others. [2] An Iraqi official describes the Iranian claims as 'a sheer lie', claiming that Iraq does not use any chemical weapons. [3]

[1] *Letter dated 9 October 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19193, 9 October 1988.

[2] Tehran home service, 1030 GMT 9 October 87, as reported in: 'Iran's Protest to UN over Alleged Iraqi Chemical Attack', BBC-SWB, 12 October 1987, ME/8696/A/1

[3] [No author listed] (from Baghdad), 'Iraq Denies Using Chemical Weapons in Gulf War', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 10 October 1987, ref 1010073.

19871109

**H 9 November 1987** [draft UNGA resolution on UNSG inspection rights (A/C.1/42/L.67/Rev.1) is debated in First Committee and adopted by consensus — A/C.1/42/PV.37]

19871130

**H 30 November 1987** [Adoption of UNGA resolution 42/37 C]

19880111

**11 January 1988** Chemical shells are fired by Iraqi forces in one of the sectors opposite Sardasht, resulting in a number of personnel sustaining injuries, Iranian sources claim. No further details are offered. [1]

The following day Iran presents a complaint to the UN, describing the attack as: 'Iraq fired chemical artillery shells at Sardasht'. [2] However this incident is not included in the collated list of allegations of chemical weapons use presented to the Conference on Disarmament by Iran in April 1988. [3]

[1] Tehran Home Service, 1630 GMT 11 January 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 15 January 1988, ME/0049/A/1; [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Claims Destroying Iraq's Missile Launching Pad', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 11 January 1988, ref 0111001.

[2] *Letter dated 12 January 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19418, 12 January 1988.

[3] *Letter Dated 11 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran Addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament*, Conference on Disarmament Document CD/827, 12 April 1988.

19880311

**11 March 1988** Iraqi aircraft drop chemical bombs on the village of Garmab, near Bakhtaran, injuring five people, so IRNA reports. [1]

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati informs the Secretary-General of this allegation, [2] although there is some initial confusion about the timing of the alleged attack. Velayati writes in a further letter to the Secretary-General that it takes place at 1630 hours on this day resulting in the deaths of two civilians. [3] He calls on the UN to take 'effective and immediate measures'. [4]

[1] IRNA, 0925 GMT 12 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 18 March 1988, ME/0103/A/1.

[2] *Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19615, 14 March 1988.

[3] *Letter dated 15 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19621, 15 March 1988.

[4] *Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19619, 15 March 1988; see also [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran Urges Strong UN Action to Curb Iraqi Attacks', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 15 March 1988, ref 0315012.

19880316

**16 March 1988** Kurdish areas of Iraq are attacked with chemical weapons 'on a massive scale', Iranian sources claim. [1] In particular, the towns of Halabja and Dojaila are attacked with chemical weapons 'killing many defenceless residents', so IRNA reports. [2] The towns are currently on the front line of the Iran-Iraq War. Initial information suggests 'some 4000 residents ... killed', [3] although it is not clear if this is meant to be the figure for Halabja only or for Halabja, Dojaila and the neighbouring community of Khormal together. Later Iran says the chemical weapons casualties in and around Halabja during 16-18 March total 12 500, [4] including more than 5500 dead. [5] Later research shows the number to be, at minimum, in excess of 3200. [6]

[1] *Letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19639, 17 March 1988.

[2] Martin Marris (from Nicosia), 'Iraqi Missile Strikes Tehran, Iran Says it Seized Two Border Towns', Associated Press, 17 March 1988.

[3] IRNA, 1800 GMT 17 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 23 March 1988, ME/0107/A/1; *Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19647, 18 March 1988

[4] *Letter Dated 11 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran Addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament*, Conference on Disarmament Document CD/827, 12 April 1988.

[5] Speech by the representative of Iran to the Conference on Disarmament, Mr Mashhadi, as reported in CD document CD/PV.450, 22 March 1988.

[6] A total of 3200 names of individuals killed was collected in the course of systematic interviews with survivors by researcher Shorsh Resool, as reported in: Human Rights Watch, *Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (Yale University Press, 1995).

19880317

**17 March 1988** Iraqi planes attack the towns of Nowsud and Marivan with mustard gas bombs, 'killing a number of civilians', Iranian sources report, in attacks that continue into the next day. [1] Nowsud, an Iranian town captured by Iraq at the beginning of the war, has just been recaptured. [2] Iran writes to the UN Secretary-General stating that a camp containing 'Kurdish immigrants' near Marivan is hit by 'massive chemical attacks' resulting in the deaths of five people and calling for a UN investigation of the incident. [3]

In none of the reports are specific details given. [Note: The town of Marivan is about 40km NE of Halabja.]

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati urges the 'International Red Cross' to inquire into the Iraqi chemical bombings of the northeastern border towns newly occupied by Iran.[4]

[1] Iranian communique, 1639 GMT 19 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 23 March 1988, ME/0107/A/1.

[2] IRNA, 0658 GMT 18 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 23 March 1988, ME/0107/A/1.

[3] *Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19650, 18 March 1988.

[4] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Sets Condition for Halting Attacks on Iraqi Cities', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 18 March 1988, ref 0318245.

19880319

**H 19 March 1988** [Velayati writes to UNSG — 'What is the effect of these crimes on the one hand and the silence of the United Nations on the other? Have they not turned the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international instruments into empty and ineffective slogans?' — S/19664; he makes no specific request for a UN investigation to follow up the one in S/19650.]

19880321

**21 March 1988** Iran reiterates its request [see 17 March] to the UN for an investigatory mission in Kurdish areas.[1]

Iran's acting permanent representative to the UN, Mohammad Ja'afar Mahallati, tells a press conference that his country would like to see the Security Council meet on Iraq's use of chemical weapons 'independently from other war issues'.[2] He describes the attacks on Halabja and the villages of Dojaila and Khorma as 'the most extensive use of nerve gas on record' and claims the Iraqi air force has been dropping cluster bombs containing mustard gas, nerve gas, and cyanide at these locations in Northeastern Iraq since 17 March.[3]

[1] *Letter dated 21 March 1988 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19665, 21 March 1988.

[2] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran Asks UN to Investigate Iraq's Use of Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 21 March 1988, ref 0321023;

[3] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran Says Iraq Killed 5,000 with Gas', United Press International, 21 March 1988.

19880322

**22 March 1988** Further chemical weapons attacks have taken place on Iranian territory according to Iranian sources, although reports vary. One says Iraqi aircraft bombard three Iranian villages near the border towns of Marivan and Sardasht with chemical weapons during the morning, killing and wounding numerous people.[1] Another suggests four villages in Marivan and two in Sardasht are attacked with chemical weapons.[2] The Iranian government informs the UN that the attacks take place on 'the suburbs of Sardasht and the villages of Namshaz, Tazvar, Valak and Ghal'eh-ji in the vicinity of Marivan' and that 'chemical agents were employed in three separate aerial bombardments by 13 aircraft', resulting in 31 deaths and 450 serious injuries.[3]

Iran's Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashami sends a message to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees accusing Iraq of using chemical weapons in Kurdish areas of northeastern Iraq, causing thousands of people to seek shelter in Iran. He calls upon international organizations to break their silence and condemn the attacks.[4]

The collated list of allegations of chemical weapons use presented to the Conference on Disarmament by Iran in April

1988 gives the following details for this date — 'Ghalejy Village in Marivan' (450 casualties), 'North Western part of Nodsheh in Tovaileh', 'Eskamaabad City', Alout area in Sardasht' (8 casualties), 'Kaanidenar area in Marivan', 'Tazeh Aabaad, Baalak, Nezhmaar, Ghalejy Villages in Marivan' (395 casualties).[5]

[1] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Accuses Iraq of Dropping Chemical Bombs', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 22 March 1988, ref 0322160; [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iraqi Missiles Attack Kills Civilians in Tehran', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 22 March 1988, ref 0322028.

[2] IRNA (in English), 1706 GMT 22 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 31 March 1988, ME/0114/A/1.

[3] *Letter dated 24 March 1988 from the from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19682, 25 March 1988.

[4] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Accuses Iraq of Dropping Chemical Bombs', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 22 March 1988, ref 0322160.

[5] *Letter Dated 11 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran Addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament*, CD document CD/827, 12 April 1988.

19880323

**23 March 1988** From Geneva, the International Committee of the Red Cross [see 17 March] issues a statement: 'In a new and tragic escalation of the Iraq-Iran conflict, chemical weapons have been used, killing a great number of civilians in the province of Sulaymaniyah ... The use of chemical weapons, whether against military personnel or civilians, is absolutely forbidden by international law and is to be condemned at all times'.[1] The ICRC tells Iran it is ready to send emergency assistance.[2]

[1] Daniel J Silva (from Manama, Bahrain), [No title], United Press International, 23 March 1988.

[2] Andrew Gowers, 'Gulf War chemical weapons condemned', *Financial Times*, 24 March 1988, p.3.

19880325

**25 March 1988** Médecins Sans Frontières sends a team into Iran.[1]

The following day, Belgian doctor Reginold Moreels tells a press conference that the faces and the nails of some of the bodies of casualties examined in Halabja [see 16 March] have turned blue and that 'this shows that they were killed by cyanide gas'. He also states that many casualties have blisters like those associated with mustard. Dr Moreels declines to confirm whether Iraq used nerve agent as it decomposes too quickly to be identified.[2]

[1] Marian Houk, 'Iran Enlists US Help in Treating Victims of Chemical Attack', *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 April 1988, p. 12.

[2] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iraq Uses Chemical Weapons in War, Say Western Doctors', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 26 March 1988, ref 0326034.

19880325

**25 March 1988** The UN Secretary-General decides to dispatch a mission to investigate the recent Iranian complaints of use of Iraqi chemical weapons [see 21 March].[1] The decision attracts some press attention.[2]

The spokesman for the UN Secretary-General says: 'Sadly, there is considerable and most serious evidence in the public domain that chemical weapons have again been used by Iraqi forces in the past few days, causing a high number of casualties, including civilians in both Iran and Iraq'.[3] Press reports suggest the Secretary-General also takes reports from the Red Cross into account.[4]

Earlier in the day, Iran's UN Ambassador, Mohammad Ja'far Mahallati, holds a press conference calling for a UN investigation. He says that UN inaction would not only lead to the disappearance of the evidence of the use of chemical

weapons but would reassure Iraq and 'encourage it' to continue these 'crimes'.[5]

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/19823, 25 April 1988.

[2] For example: Paul Alexander (from UN New York), 'UN to Examine Victims of Chemical Weapons in Iran-Iraq War', Associated Press, 26 March 1988; Hanns Neuerbourg, 'After A Month of Missiles, Tehran Fears Poison Gas', Associated Press, 31 March 1988.

[3] As quoted in *Letter dated 27 April 1988 from the Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19844 and A/43/338, 27 April 1988.

[4] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Chief Confirms Iraqi use of Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 25 March 1988, ref 0325281.

[5] Tehran Home Service, 1030 GMT 26 March 1988, as reported in 'Iran Views UN Secretary-General's Statement on Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons as Inadequate; UN decision to Send Experts to Halabjah', BBC-SWB, 28 March 1988, ME/0111/A/1.

19880328

**28 March 1988** The UN mission [see 25 March] lands in Tehran to investigate the chemical weapons attack on Kurdish villages in northeastern Iraq and on villages in northwestern Iran.[1] The mission comprises Dr Manuel Dominguez, a Spanish military medical specialist and veteran of earlier UN investigations [see 6 May 1987], accompanied by James Holger of the UN secretariat.

Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, writes to the Secretary-General condemning the UN decision to send this mission and calling his statement announcing the mission 'biased and ill-balanced'. Tariq Aziz neither acknowledges nor denies Iraqi use of chemical weapons in the letter, but accuses Iran of using such weapons, stating 'With regard to the establishment of facts and in reply to the campaign that speaks of Iraq's use of chemical weapons, we wish to reaffirm that Iran has used chemical weapons a number of times at the battlefronts and in the towns just as it used CS gas at the beginning of the war against our forces in the town of Muhammarah [Khorramshahr] and has used it at the southern and northern fronts'.[2] The Iraqi News Agency circulates the text.[3] Press reporting describes the letter as being of 15 pages in extent[4] although the copy as distributed by the UN is 4 pages long and that by INA is 3 pages.

Iran is reported to be unhappy with the composition of the UN team as it consists of a political officer and a medical doctor but no chemical weapons expert to identify the chemicals used in the attacks.[5]

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/19823, 25 April 1988; Daniel J Silva (from Manama), [no title], United Press International, 28 March 1988.

[2] *Letter dated 28 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19695, 28 March 1988.

[3] INA, 1035 GMT 29 March 1988, as reported in 'Iraqi Foreign Minister Accuses the UN of Giving "Privileges" to Iran and of Failing to Investigate Iranian "Atrocities"', BBC-SWB, 1 April 1988, ME/0114/A/1.

[4] Victoria Graham (from UN New York), 'Iraq Rips UN Chemical Arms Team, Says Iraqi POWs Abused', Associated Press, 28 March 1988.

[5] Marian Houk, 'Iran Enlists US Help in Treating Victims of Chemical Attack', *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 April 1988, p. 12.

19880331

**31 March 1988** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati addresses the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and raises the subject of Halabja [see 16 March]. 'You have undoubtedly seen glimpses of this holocaust, and how the inhabitants of the city of Halabja fell prey to extensive chemical weapon bombardment by Iraq. Frightened women

embracing their children, seeking shelter, died on the spot. Fathers who took their beloved ones to the cellars to escape the aerial bombardment did not know that these places would be gas chambers for the whole of their families. Lethal and poisonous gases had superseded the fresh spring weather. Except for those who had left the city earlier, the rest were all poisoned to death by chemical weapons. Chemical weapons kill old and young, men and women indiscriminately. The aim is to kill every living thing in their path.' He describes the attack as the worst of its kind since the First World War. Velayati repeats the suggestion that Iraq first began to use chemical weapons in January 1981 [see 13 January 1981, but see also 16 November 1980] and later expanded its use in 1984. He accuses the US and other influential states of having a pro-Iraq policy that has prevented the UN from taking the strong measures necessary to deter Iraqi chemical weapons attacks. He accuses some Security Council members of having obstructed the taking of serious action by the Council, despite the extent of available evidence, and says his government 'consider positive the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General, who, despite all pressures, fulfilled his responsibility and acted in accordance with resolution 42/37 C [see 30 November 1987] to dispatch an investigation team, although incomplete in composition. ... At this juncture the question is more serious than ever: how long should we tolerate witnessing the people of Iran and Iraq fall prey to the use of chemical weapons by Iraq, while no serious action has so far been taken to counter the deployment of these weapons?' [1]

[1] Speech as reproduced in CD document CD/PV.453, 31 March 1988. See also: [No author listed] (from Geneva), 'Iran's Foreign Minister Accuses Iraq of Using Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 31 March 1988, ref 0331175; [No author listed] (from Geneva), 'Minister Tells Conference 5,000 Died in Chemical Attack', United Press International, 31 March 1988.

19880403

**3 April 1988** In Tehran, Iran's deputy foreign minister, Muhammed Javad Larijani, gives a press conference prior to travelling to the UN in New York. He responds to the allegation by the US State Department [see 23 March] that Iran used chemical weapons against Halabja [see 16 March] by saying that this contention is 'very naïve' and that the statement is an attempt to 'justify American support for Iraq'. [1]

[1] Warren Richey (from Tehran), 'Iran's Victories Add Force to Demands at UN', *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 April 1988, p. 17.

19880404

**Q4 April 1988** Iraq uses chemical weapons during the previous two days on two Iranian-held villages in Iraqi Kurdistan, near Kirkuk, wounding 18 local Kurdish tribesmen, so Iranian sources claim.[1] [*\*Iran also circulates S/19726-A/43/279 dated 4 Apr which includes pics, get!! NB — letter S/19844-A/43/338 (27 April) contains Iran's critical reaction to specialist report S/19823 (10 April), get also!!\**]

[1] Lee Stokes (from Manama, Bahrain), 'Iran, Iraq Resume Missile Attacks on Cities', United Press International, 4 April 1988.

19880404

**4 April 1988** Iraq claims 88 of its soldiers have been injured by chemical weapons in attacks by Iran in the Halabja region during 30–31 March. The Iraqi Foreign Minister requests the UN Secretary-General to send a mission to Baghdad 'in order to examine the wounded and obtain detailed information about the attack'. [1] It is not clear from the reporting what form these wounds are supposed to take.

Iraq subsequently announces that 'victims of the chemical weapons used by Iran' will be sent to 'a number of European countries, including Austria', for treatment. [2]

The UN Secretary-General decides to meet the request. He dispatches the medical specialist who had just finished investigating the Iranian complaints [see 28 March].[3]

[Note: these 88 alleged Iraqi casualties are often mistakenly referred to as having been incurred during the better known attack with chemical weapons on Halabja and surrounding villages earlier in the month, see 16 March.]

[1] *Letter dated 4 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*. UN document S/19730, dated 5 April 1988; INA from Baghdad, 1830 GMT 4 April 1988, as translated from the Arabic in FBIS-NES-88-065, 5 April 1988 and as reported in 'Iraq Invites UN Mission to Visit Victims of "Chemical Bombardment" Iranian Denial', BBC-SWB, 6 April 1988, ME/0118/A/1; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iraq Urges UN Inquiry of Iranian Use of Chemical Arms', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 4 April 1988, ref 0404020; [no author listed] (from Baghdad), 'Iraq fires two missiles into Qom, Isfahan', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 5 April 1988, ref 0405141.

[2] INA from Baghdad, 1820 GMT 7 April 1988, as translated from the Arabic in FBIS-NES-88-068, 8 April 1988, p 16; [no author listed] (from London), 'Fifteen Iraqi Soldiers Flown to London, Vienna for Treatment', Associated Press, 11 April 1988.

[3] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/19823, 25 April 1988.

19880406

**6 April 1988** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati sends a letter to the UN Secretary-General saying 'it is imperative to dispatch a chemical weapons specialist as well as a military specialist to the Islamic Republic to complete the work of the previous team'[1] [see 28 March].

According to IRNA, Velayati 'categorically rejected Baghdad's baseless claims that Iran had used chemical weapons against Iraqi forces' and 'expressed surprise that Javier Perez de Cuellar has responded positively to the untenable Iraqi request for dispatch of a UN team to Iraq within 24 hours, while it took more than two weeks for the Secretary-General to respond to serious and repeated request by Iran regarding a far graver situation. [The] Iraqi regime, in a vain attempt to divert the international public opinion from Iraqi genocide in the city of Halabjah [Halabja] and in the Qara Dagh [Karadagh] region, where Iraqi civilians were targets of chemical warfare by the Iraqi war criminals, has called on the UN to send a team to Iraq. In addition to conducting on-sight investigation of the extent of this latest Iraqi war crime, the team can indeed provide the urgently needed, and till now unavailable, emergency medical warfare in the Qara Dagh region'. Velayati is said to conclude the letter by saying, 'in view of the repeated use of chemical weapons in increasingly alarming proportions by Iraq, it is necessary that this investigative endeavour of the Secretary-General lead to a binding and enforceable decision on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. It is imperative that the parties commit themselves to accept and abide by such a binding decision'. [2]

[1] [No author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN to Probe Iraqi Chemical Weapons Charges', United Press International, 6 April 1988.

[2] IRNA, 1558 GMT 6 April 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Foreign Minister's Letter to UN: Response to Calls for Chemical Weapons Investigations', BBC-SWB, 8 April 1988, ME/0120/A/1.

19880411

**11 April 1988** In a formal submission to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Iran transmits a 'list of occasions of use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi régime ... from [13] January 1981 to [22] March 1988'. The list records more than 44 000 casualties in 242 episodes.[1]

[1] *Letter Dated 11 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran Addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament*, Conference on Disarmament Document CD/827, 12 April 1988.

19880414

**14 April 1988** The UN mission of inquiry into the allegations of Iraqi and Iranian chemical warfare [see 28 March and 4 April] transmits its report to the Secretary-General.[1] Medical specialist, Dr Manuel Dominguez (Spain), describes his visits to an Iraqi military hospital and, in Iran, sites of alleged chemical weapons attack as well as medical establishments. He found that, in most of the cases he examined in both countries, the patients had been exposed to mustard gas. In a few of the cases examined in Iran and, with much less certainty, Iraq, an unidentified anticholinesterase agent was also implicated. The report had nothing to say about whose weapons had injured the Iraqi soldiers. From his observations in Iran he 'inferred that, compared with previous years, there has been an increase in the intensity of the attacks with chemical agents, in terms of both the number of victims and of the severity of injuries sustained. Furthermore, there appeared to be a higher proportion of civilians among those affected than in previous investigations'. Dr Dominguez had not been able to travel to the Halabja area, where all of the patients he examined in Iraq, and some of those he examined in Iran, were said to have been injured.

The report makes no specific mention of Iraq as user of chemical weapons. This is in marked contrast to the previous two reports that specifically named Iraq as the user [see 14 March 1986 and 13 May 1987]. The report is published on 25 April.

[1] *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/19823, 25 April 1988.

19880423

**23 April 1988** Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Mohammad Mahallati sends a formal request to the Secretary-General for an investigation mission 'in connection with the renewed use of such weapons against our country's non-military areas'. He adds: 'We request the renewed and immediate dispatch of an UN expert delegation in order to investigate the resumed use of chemical weapons by Iraq, and we hope that this time the Secretary-General will act without delay or hesitation'. He expresses the hope that the UN's next delegation dispatched to the chemical weapons areas 'will include all the necessary experts for preparing a comprehensive and all-sided report'. [1]

The following day, the Ambassador makes a further call for another UN investigatory mission to be dispatched to Iran, saying that Iraqi chemical weapons attacks continued even as the world waited for the report of the last mission [see 14 April].[2]

[1] Lee Stokes (from Manama, Bahrain), 'Iran Asks for UN Probe of Chemical Warfare', United Press International, 23 April 1988; Tehran Home Service, 1030 GMT 23 April 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Envoy Complains of UN's "Ineffective" Reaction to Iraqi Chemical Warfare', BBC-SWB, 26 April 1988, ME/0135/A/1.

[2] IRNA from Washington in English, 1734 hrs GMT 24 April 1988, as in FBIS-NES-88-079, 25 April 1988, p 65.

19880425

**25 April 1988** The UN publishes the report on its latest investigations into allegations of chemical weapons use in Iran and Iraq [see 14 April].[1]

Notwithstanding that the UN report did not lay blame on any particular country for the chemical attacks, the Iraqi Mission to the UN claims: 'it definitely bears out our contention that Iran used chemical weapons. ... We have stated over and over that we will use any means to defend our sovereignty. It's a matter of survival for us. We are not confirming or denying it — but definitely we are not denying it'. An Iranian diplomat at the UN says that the report is still

being studied and so there will be no official comment at this stage, but his personal reaction, he says, is disappointment.[2]

Two days later, Iran's acting Permanent Representative to the UN, Mohammad Mahallati Mahallati writes to the Secretary-General. He writes that it is 'very disappointing' that the report 'fails to address the crime in a clear and unambiguous tone' and contrasts the lack of attribution of blame in the report for the use of chemical weapons with the 'clear statement regarding the issue of responsibility made on his behalf' when the decision to despatch the mission was announced [see 25 March].[3] In an interview with the Iranian press, Mahallati calls the report defective and criticizes the delay in its release as unjustified.[4]

[1] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Says Chemical Weapons used in Iran, Iraq', United Press International, 26 April 1988; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Mission Determines use of Chemical Weapons in Gulf War', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 26 April 1988, ref 0426009.

[2] Candice Hughes (from UN New York), 'UN Says Chemical Warfare Increasing in Iran-Iraq Conflict', Associated Press, 26 April 1988; Marian Houk (from UN New York), 'UN Report Doesn't Give Iran Hoped-For Boost', *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 April 1988, p. 11.

[3] *Letter dated 27 April 1988 from the Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/19844 and A/43/338, dated 27 April 1988; [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran Disappointed at UN Report on Chemical Warfare', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 28 April 1988, ref 0428043.

[4] Tehran Home Service, 1030 GMT 27 April 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Report on Findings of UN Mission on Chemical Warfare', BBC-SWB, 29 April 1988, ME/0138/A/1.

19880509

**9 May 1988** The UN Security Council adopts resolution 612 which: 'Condemns vigorously the continued use of chemical weapons in the war between Iran and Iraq contrary to the obligations under the Geneva Protocol'; 'Expects both sides to refrain from the future use of chemical weapons'; and 'Calls upon all states to continue to apply or to establish strict control of the export to the parties to the conflict of chemical products serving for the production of chemical weapons'.[1]

[1] S/RES/612

19880510

**10 May 1988** The clinical appendix to the report of the UN Secretary-General's most recent chemical weapons investigatory mission to Iran and Iraq [see 25 April] is published.[1]

[1] 'Appendix II: Summary report on patients examined by the medical specialist with relevant clinical data', *Report of the Mission Dispatched by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/19823/Add.1, 10 May 1988.

19880517

**17 May 1988** Iraqi planes drop chemical bombs at 0915 GMT on three villages near Sardasht, injuring more than 60 civilians, some seriously, according to an IRNA report.[1]

The following day, IRNA reports that 200 civilians have died from the Iraqi chemical weapons attack in the area around Sardasht and Urumiyeh.[2]

Iran presents the following information to the United Nations: 'On 17 May 1988, villages of Molla-Sheikh and Bazileh in the vicinity of Sardasht were targets of Iraqi aerial attacks using chemical agents which caused injury to 150 people'.[3]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1745 GMT 17 May 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 20 May 1988, ME/0156/A/1; [No author listed] (from Tehran) 'Iraq jets drop chemical bombs on Iranian villages', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 17 May 1988, ref 0517019.

[2] IRNA (in English), 0753 GMT 18 May 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 20 May 1988, ME/0156/A/1.

[3] *Letter dated 19 May 1988 from the Charge d'Affaires A.I. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, as reproduced in UN document S/19892, dated 19 May 1988. See also: Tehran Home Service, 0430 GMT 20 May 1988, 'Iran and Iraq in Brief; Iran's UN Delegation Submits Note on Iraqi Chemical Warfare', as reported in BBC-SWB, 24 May 1988, ME/0159/A/1.

19880518

**18 May 1988** Iraqi aircraft bomb a village near Marivan with chemical weapons at 0805 GMT, killing three civilians and wounding eight more, so IRNA claims.[1]

The following day, IRNA reports the death toll has risen to 12, all of whom are civilians.[2]

Iran presents the following information to the United Nations: 'On 18 May 1988, intruding Iraqi fighters dropped chemical bombs on the village of Ney in the vicinity of Marivan, which caused the martyrdom of three and injury to eight others'. The Iranian mission to the UN requests the dispatch of another investigatory mission and calls for punitive and preventive measures by the Security Council under the terms of resolution 612 [see 9 May].[3] The Secretary-General refers the matter to the Security Council.

[1] IRNA (in English), 1443 GMT 18 May 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 20 May 1988, ME/0156/A/1.

[2] IRNA (in English), 0924 GMT 19 May 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 27 May 1988, ME/0162/A/1.

[3] *Letter dated 19 May 1988 from the Charge d'Affaires A.I. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, as reproduced in UN document S/19892, dated 19 May 1988. See also: Tehran Home Service, 0430 GMT 20 May 1988, 'Iran and Iraq in Brief; Iran's UN Delegation Submits Note on Iraqi Chemical Warfare', as reported in BBC-SWB, 24 May 1988, ME/0159/A/1.

19880523

**23 May 1988** Iran's UN Envoy meets with the President of the UN Security Council to strongly demand that the Council take action, under the auspices of resolution 612 [see 9 May], to condemn the Iraqi use of chemical weapons. He also states that Iran is prepared to welcome a new UN investigation team.[1]

[1] Tehran Home Service, 1630 GMT 24 May 1988, as reported in 'Iran's UN Envoy Calls for Action over Iraqi "Violation" of Chemical Weapons Resolution', BBC-SWB, 26 May 1988, ME/0161/A/1.

19880601

**1 June 1988** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati addresses the Third UN Special Session on Disarmament. He devotes most of his speech to the subject of Iraqi use of chemical weapons and the failure of the UN to stop it. He claims Iraq has used chemical weapons over 250 times since the beginning of the war and that the 'worst attack of all' — Halabja [see 16 March] — was the result of the international community's 'indifference and irresponsible attitude'. He proposes the establishment of a permanent team of UN chemical weapons specialists in the region which would have an 'important deterrence result'. He also suggests that the UN should send specialists to investigate 'suspected chemical-producing facilities in the culprit state'.[1]

[1] Tehran Home Service, 0330 GMT 2 June 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Foreign Minister Calls on UN Disarmament Session to Condemn Iraqi Chemical Warfare', BBC-SWB, 7 June 1988, ME/0171/A/1; [No author listed] (from New York), 'Iran Blasts Iraq for Chemical Weapons Use', United Press International, 1 June 1988.

19880610

**10 June 1988** Acting Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Mohammad Mahallati, tells a press conference Iran is 'indignant at the football game between the [UN] secretariat and the Security Council' in responding to Iraq's use of chemical weapons which he says should be

considered 'independent of any other elements of the conflict'.[1]

[1] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Iran Criticizes UN Inaction on Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 10 June 1988, ref 0610008.

19880616

**H 16 June 1988** [Iran repeats its request for a new chemical weapons investigatory mission [see 19 May] — UN doc A/43/410 and S/19946, cited in S/20060.]

19880617

**17 June 1988** The President of the Security Council informs the Secretary-General that members of the Council, while unanimously reaffirming the condemnation of use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq War, 'consider that the Security Council could not act on the basis of allegations by one side and that an independent and technical confirmation of the accusation was indispensable for the Council to act'. In that connection, the members of the Council request the co-operation of the Secretary-General.[1]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/20060, dated 20 July 1988.

19880621

**H 21 June 1988** [decision for UN investigation announced; see 17 June ??]

19880622

**22 June 1988** As the UN Secretary-General's mission [see 17 June] is ready to set off, Iran says it cannot immediately receive it, being unable to guarantee its safety. A week goes by before the team, by then depleted in numbers, can start out.[1]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/20060, dated 20 July 1988.

19880624

**24 June 1988** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, is interviewed on Tehran Home Service radio. He talks about the forthcoming UN investigation into allegations of Iraqi use of chemical weapons: 'This invitation was issued a few weeks ago. On a number of occasions after the ratification of Resolution 612 in connection with Iraq's use of chemical weapons, the Iraqi regime repeatedly used chemical weapons against us. We repeatedly reported this to the UN and requested that, in accordance with the Security Council's approval, the Secretary-General should dispatch missions to inspect the locations and investigate the effects of the weapons used immediately upon receiving reports of the contravention of an agreement such as the use of chemical weapons here which is an overt contravention of the recent Security Council resolution. Unfortunately, a few weeks passed and the Security Council delayed sending a delegation; therefore, most of the traces of the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi regime have been destroyed. This procrastination and delay definitely have political reasons; that is, Iraq's protectors have influenced the [UN] Security Council. ... But, in any case, the sending of missions to investigate the use of chemical weapons by Iraq could have positive results.[1]

[1] Tehran Home Service, 1630 GMT 24 June 1988, as reported in 'Iran: Velayati Comments on European Tour, UN Mission on Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 27 June 1988, ME/0188/A/1.

19880624

**24 June 1988** The Iraqi Mission to the UN releases a statement saying, 'On Tuesday, 21st June 1988, the spokesman for the Secretary-General announced that the Secretary-General, after his meeting with the Iranian

permanent representative, had decided to send a mission to investigate Iranian allegations on the use of chemical weapons by Iraq. Upon the announcement of this decision, we expressed our surprise at this hasty decision, which was based on an arbitrary interpretation of the informal consultations of the Security Council on this subject. After the decision to dispatch the team was made, the permanent representative of Iran notified the secretariat that his government was not ready to receive the mission. This development confirms beyond any doubt that the Iranian authorities do not have the evidence to back up their allegations and fabrications, which coincided with Iran's military defeats on the battlefield in recent months. It also confirms beyond any doubt that the secretariat was once again hasty in responding to unsubstantiated Iranian allegations and lies. We have on many occasions warned that to do so would enable the Iranian regime to continue its manoeuvring to block the implementation of Resolution 598 [see 20 July 1987]'.[1]

[1] Iraqi News Agency, 24 June 1988, as reported in 'Iraqi Statement on UN Mission to Investigate use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 27 June 1988, ME/0188/A/1.

19880628

**28 June 1988** The United Nations announces that the delayed investigation mission [see 22 June] 'is scheduled to depart from Europe on June 30 and will spend a few days in Iran'.[1]

[1] Lei Lili, 'UN Sends Mission to Iran on Use of Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 28 June 1988, ref 0628001.

19880701

**1 July 1988** The new UN chemical weapons investigatory mission [see 17 June] arrives in Tehran. It comprises the Deputy Head of the NBC Defence Department of the Swedish Defence Research Institute, Erik Dahlgren, and a colonel in the Spanish Army Medical Corps who is also Professor of Preventive Medicine at the University of Madrid and a veteran of the earlier UN investigations, Manuel Dominguez. They are accompanied by a senior UN official, Vicente Berasategui. They leave Iran on 5 July.[1]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*, UN document S/20060, dated 20 July 1988.

19880703

**3 July 1988** Iraq's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ismat Kittani, writes to the UN Secretary-General alleging Iranian use of chemical warfare on 20 June and 1 July. He requests a UN investigatory mission, and states that 'in one of the sectors on the front where the Iranian régime's armed forces were obliged to withdraw, the Iraqi forces have discovered a store of chemical weapons which that criminal régime was using against our armed forces'. Two days later he writes again, asking for the letter to be circulated as a Security Council document.[1]

Nadir Younes, a press officer for the UN, says the request is being studied in Geneva and it is possible the UN may send an investigation team.[2]

[1] *Letter dated 5 July 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*. UN document S/19982, dated 5 July 1988.

[2] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Likely to Probe Alleged Iranian Use of Chemical Arms', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 6 July 1988, ref 0706016.

19880708

**8 July 1988** The UN chemical weapons investigatory mission transmits to the Secretary-General its report on its inquiries in Iran [see 1 July]. The investigators had found it 'possible to determine without any doubt that, in the course of June 1988, Iranian soldiers were affected by ... mustard gas';

36 such cases were examined. The report states that mustard gas had been found in samples of soil and bomb fragments collected by the team; the fragments had evidently 'come from bombs similar to those examined by the [UN] teams dispatched to ... Iran in 1984, 1986 and 1987'.

As to other chemical weapons agents, the report states that, 'while the effects of toxic organophosphorus compounds has been confirmed by clinical examination of some patients, the use of nerve gas or cyanide was not confirmed by chemical analysis in the field, no doubt owing to their rapid disappearance'. The report accordingly suggests that it might 'be necessary to review existing machinery for verification by UN teams of the use of chemical weapons in order to ensure the timely presence of experts at the site of alleged attacks'.

As to the extent of the use of chemical weapons agents, the report states that 'the findings of the present mission together with those of preceding missions support the conclusion that such use has become more intense and frequent'. [1]

The report is not distributed as a Security Council document until 20 July and is not publicly released until 1 August. Its clinical appendix is distributed on 2 August. [2]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN doc S/20060 of 20 July 1988.

[2] UN doc S/20060/Add.1 of 2 August 1988.

19880710

**10 July 1988** The same (Dahlgren, Dominguez and Berasategui) UN chemical weapons investigatory mission arrives in Iraq to investigate the complaint of Iranian chemical weapons [see 3 July, see also 8 July]. It is back in Geneva on 12 July. [1]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN document S/20063 of 25 July 1988.

19880713

**13 July 1988** The UN chemical weapons investigatory mission transmits to the Secretary-General its report on its inquiries in Iraq [see 10 July]. [1] The investigators indicate they had found conclusive clinical evidence of mustard-gas injury in 9 Iraqi soldiers. They detected mustard gas in fragments of 81mm mortar-bombs said to have been picked up after an alleged Iranian chemical weapons attack, furnished to them by Iraqi military authorities.

The report also includes the investigation of what was described to the team by Iraqi authorities as a store of Iranian chemical weapons that had been captured at Salamcha: crates of rusty 81mm mortar bombs. The crates had tested positive for mustard, but not the liquid drawn from one of the mortar bombs.

The report closes thus: 'On the basis of the present investigation, the number of casualties and the extent of their injuries seemed less extensive than in previous investigations'. Present throughout the report, and made almost explicit in some parts of it, is the suggestion that Iraqi authorities may have manipulated the evidence.

The report is not distributed as a Security Council document until 25 July and is not publicly released until 1 August.

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN document S/20063 of 25 July 1988.

19880720

**D 20 July 1988** [UN report S/20060 circulated to UNSC, use ref 8 July or 1 August instead]

19880725

**H 25 July 1988** ['Members of the Security Council today showed their profound concern with the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq conflict and called again on the two warring states to 'exercise maximum restraint'. 'Members of the Council are profoundly worried and concerned with the repeated use of chemical weapons in the conflict', Paulo Nogueira-Batista, President of the Council for the month of July, told reporters following the Council's consultations on an Iranian complaint against Iraqi use of chemical weapons. any alleged use of chemical weapons will be clarified in the on-going investigation, he said, referring to a UN mission sent last week by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to look into the status of prisoners of war in both Iran and Iraq. Members of the council began meetings this morning as requested by Iranian ambassador Mohammad Ja'afar Mahallati to 'consider the new Iraqi massive use of chemical weapons'.'] — [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN concerned over use of chemical weapons in Gulf', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 25 July 1988, ref. 0725014]

19880725

**D 25 July 1988** [UN report S/20063 circulated to UNSC, use ref 13 July or 1 August instead]

19880801

**1 August 1988** The reports of the UN chemical weapons investigatory mission to Iran [see 8 July] and Iraq [see 13 July] are finally published. Desire not to inhibit the incipient Iran-Iraq peace talks is widely supposed to have caused the publication delay. [1] Another theory is alleged Iraqi influence on the Arabic translation service of the UN. [2]

Iranian Permanent Representative to the UN Mohammad Mahallati describes the report as 'positive'. He says that since the adoption of resolution 612 [9 May], Iraq has three times made vast use of chemical weapons. [3]

The Associated Press wire story on the reports, much relied upon by English-language newspapers around the world, erroneously states that the reports 'accused both Iraq and Iran of using chemical weapons'. [4]

[1] Jane Rosen (from New York), 'US hints at Gulf role for Moscow', *Guardian* (London), 28 July 1988, p 1.

[2] Leonard Doyle (from New York), 'Iraqis suppress gas war report', *Independent* (London), 29 July 1988, p 1.

[3] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'UN Chief Anxious about Use of Chemical Weapons against Iran', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 1 August 1988 ref 0801176.

[4] [no author listed] (from UN New York), Associated Press, as in: 'UN cites "intensive" use of poison gas by Iraq, but also accuses Iran', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 August 1988, p 2.

19880803

**Q 3 August 1988** Alleging renewed Iraqi chemical weapons attacks the day previously on Oshnaviyeh, Iran requests another UN investigation. [1] The Security Council decides that resolution 612 requires that any new allegation of the use of chemical weapons ought to be investigated, informing the Secretary-General of this on 5 August. The Secretary-General thereupon convenes an investigatory mission. [2] Iraq denies the allegation. [3]

[1] Paul Lewis, *New York Times*, 4 August 1988, 'Iran accuses Iraqi forces of using chemical weapons again'; and UN document S/20084 [\*full ref\*].

[2] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN document S/20134, dated 19 August 1988.

[3] Iraq, *Letter dated 4 August 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a statement by the official spokesman of the Armed Forces High Command*, as reproduced in UN document S/20089, 4 August 1988.

19880806

**6 August 1988** The *Economist* magazine comments on the UN report in the following terms: 'the Iraqis produced nine gassed soldiers and some grenades which they said they had captured from the Iranians, but the report's careful wording leaves open the possibility that the grenades were Iraqi and the soldiers were injured when handling their own side's weapons. The US State Department has, in the past, said that the Iranians are also guilty—but that they use gas less frequently and general in retaliation for Iraqi attacks. The Americans have not produced evidence'.[1]

[1] [No author listed], 'Gas Explosion in United Nations', *Economist*, 6 August 1988, p. 51.

19880812

**12 August 1988** The new UN chemical weapons investigatory mission [see 3 August] arrives in Tehran and immediately proceeds to Oshnaviyeh. Once again Erik Dahlgren is a member of the team, and so is Colonel Ulrich Imobersteg, formerly Chief of NBC Defence in the Swiss armed forces and a veteran of the 1984, 1986 and 1987 UN investigations. Replacing Colonel Dominguez is Dr van Heijst, former Director of the Dutch National Poison Control Centre. They are accompanied once again by Vicente Berasategui of the UN Secretariat. They leave Iran on 14 August.[1]

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN document S/20134, dated 19 August 1988.

19880817

**17 August 1988** The UN chemical weapons investigatory mission transmits to the Secretary-General its report on its inquiries in Iran [see 12 August]. On the basis both of clinical evidence and of chemical analysis, the investigators conclude that mustard gas, dropped in aircraft bombs of the type familiar from the previous UN investigation [see 1 August], had injured Iranian civilians, including children, at Oshnaviyeh. The UN team reports on its visits to the attack site, and laboratory tests that determined that mustard had contaminated 500 square metres. The mission reports 'chemical weapons have been used against Iranian civilians in an area adjacent to an urban centre lacking any protection against that kind of attack. ... It is with deep concern that we have reached the conclusion, on the basis of the evidence obtained during this mission, that in spite of repeated appeals by the United Nations, chemical weapons have been used against Iranian civilians. ... Their utilization against civilians is particularly offensive to the human conscience and should be strongly rejected'.[1] Unlike the previous report, Iraq is not directly named as the culprit.

As with the previous report, there is a delay before this report is made public. The report is distributed as a Security Council document on 19 August and is publicly released on 23 August.

[1] *Report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq*. Annex to UN document S/20134, dated 19 August 1988.

19880820

**20 August 1988** The UN-arranged ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq War begins. While there are no reports of breaches of the ceasefire, Iraqi military action in Kurdish regions continues.

Iraqi forces launch a large-scale attack against Kurdish guerrilla bases in northern Iraq which includes the use of mustard gas, according to Kurdish Democratic Party sources.[1] The use of chemicals is reportedly evident from its effects on grass in and around the attacked areas.[2]

[1] Gareth Parry (from London) and Adrian Foreman (from Ankara), 'Iraq "using gas against Kurds"', *Guardian* (London), 24 August 1988, p. 1.

[2] 'Massive kurdische Anklagen gegen Irak', *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 27 August 1988.

19880826

**26 August 1988** The UN Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 620 which 'condemns resolutely the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between Iran and Iraq' and encourages the Secretary-General to investigate 'promptly' allegations brought to his attention by 'any Member State' concerning the 'possible use of weapons that may constitute a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol or other relevant rules of customary international law' [see also 13 December 1982].

The resolution calls upon all states to apply strict export controls upon any chemical products implicated in chemical warfare, in particular to parties to a conflict, when it is established or when there is substantial reason to believe that they have used chemical weapons in violation of international obligations. The resolution also states that the Security Council would immediately consider 'appropriate and effective measures' if chemical weapons were used again.[1]

[Note: as with earlier Security Council resolutions and statements, such as UNSC resolution 612 [see 9 May], no specific mention is made of Iraqi use of chemical weapons, notwithstanding the report of experts published on 1 August.]

[1] UN Security Council resolution 620 (1988) adopted by the Council at its 2825th meeting on 26 August 1988.

19880828

**28 August 1988** Tens of thousands of Kurds, including hardened resistance fighters, are suddenly fleeing from northern Iraq.[1] The Iraqi Kurdistan Front reports that chemical weapons are being used on a massive scale against villagers there; it estimates that 500 civilians have been killed and 3000 injured in the latest attacks, with tens of those injured by the poison gases dying daily due to lack of medical treatment.[2]

[1] Omer Erzeren (from Istanbul) and Andreas Zumach (from Geneva), 'Massenflucht vor Iraks Giftgas', *Tageszeitung* (West Berlin), 1 September 1988; Charles P Wallace (from Nicosia), *Los Angeles Times* as in 'Iraq steps up its war against Kurdish rebels', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 September 1988; Tim Kelsey (from Uludere, SE Turkey), 'Gassed Kurds flood Turkey', *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 September 1988, p. 10; Omer Erzeren, 'Ungewohnte Bruderschaft', *Tageszeitung*, 6 September 1988.

[2] Committee Against Repression and For Democratic Rights in Iraq (CARDRI, in London) press release, 'Turkey closes border as war of genocide intensifies in Iraqi Kurdistan', dated 29 August 1988.

19880901

**1 September 1988** The leader of the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party, Massoud Barzani, addresses an appeal to the UN Security Council, calling on it to 'fulfill its recent resolution to take immediate action against any nation using chemical warfare' [see 26 August].[1]

[1] The text of the letter is printed in US *Congressional Record*, 9 September 1988, pp S12134-5.

19880908

**8 September 1988** The US State Department announces: 'The United States Government is convinced that Iraq has used chemical weapons in its military campaign against Kurdish guerrillas'; previously, US officials had said that the Government had no conclusive proof.[1]

The British, Turkish and other West European governments are continuing to say that they have no definite evidence.[2]

It is later stated in the American press with attribution to unidentified US officials that the government had delayed its announcement for almost a month in order to secure additional verification,[3] and that the US evidence included intercepts

of Iraqi military communications, as well as information gathered from Kurdish refugees in Turkey.[4]

In subsequent weeks, the press continues to report statements by individual doctors and nurses that they are treating or seeing cases of chemical weapons injury,[5] though there are also reports of doctors diagnosing natural causes for conditions attributed to chemical weapons,[6] and of refugees dead from illnesses attributed to poison gas showing no evidence of that at autopsy.[7]

[1] Barry Schweid (from Washington) for Associated Press, as in 'Shultz accuses Iraq of using chemical weapons against Kurds', *The Oregonian*, 9 September 1988, p A11; Julie Johnson (from Washington), 'US asserts Iraq used poison gas against the Kurds', *New York Times*, 9 September 1988, pp 1 & 4.

[2] Mark Tran (from Washington), 'US attacks Iraqi use of poison gas', *Guardian*, 9 September 1988, p 11; Simon Scott Plummer, 'US condemns Iraq for gassing Kurds', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1988, p 32.

[3] Julie Johnson (from Washington), 'US adamant in charge against Iraq', *New York Times*, 10 September 1988.

[4] Robert Pear (from Washington, *New York Times*, as in 'Messages said to indicate use', *International Herald Tribune*, 16 September 1988, p 5.

[5] For example: 'The Kurds: no fun in war any more', *Economist*, 10 September 1988, p 92; Tim Kelsey (from Yüksekova, Turkey), 'Gastro-enteritis rages in Kurdish refugee camps', *Independent*, 14 September 1988, p 13; Juan Carlos Gumucio, 'Worried Iraqis try to dispel gas allegations', *Times* (London), 15 September 1988, p 9; Rasit Gurdilek (from Diyarbakir), 'Tempers flare in refugee camps', *Times* (London), 19 September 1988, p 11; 'Beweise für Gaseinsatz gegen Kurden', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 September 1988; 'Kurdische Giftgasopfer in der Türkei gefunden', *Tageszeitung* (West Berlin), 22 September 1988; Helga Graham, 'Kurd crisis gives lie to rosy report', *Observer* (London), 2 October 1988, p 23.

[6] Clyde Haberman (from Ankara), 'Turkey reports Kurdish refugees showed no signs of Iraqi gassing', *New York Times*, 10 September 1988; Clyde Haberman (from Diyarbakir), 'Doctor expresses doubts on Kurds', *New York Times*, 12 September 1988, pp 1-2.

[7] Clyde Haberman (from Ankara), 'Turkey asserts Iraq has ended offensive in Kurdish region', *New York Times*, 11 September 1988.

19880912

**12 September 1988** The UK Foreign Office states that Britain now regards the evidence for chemical weapons having been used against the Kurds as 'compelling', particularly that supplied from US sources [see 8 September], though not 'conclusive'. [1] Britain, Japan, the five Nordic countries, the United States, West Germany and Italy, [2] joined by Belgium, China, France, the Netherlands and the USSR, [3] urge the UN Secretary-General to initiate an investigation under Security Council resolution 620 [see 26 August]. [4]

[1] Robert Mauthner, 'Britain seeks UN chemical weapons inquiry', *Financial Times*, 13 September 1988, p 4.

[2] David Fairhall and wire services, 'Britain and US seek Iraq gas inquiry', *Guardian*, 14 September 1988, p 6.

[3] Paul Lewis for the *New York Times* as in 'UN is asked to check reports on Kurds', *International Herald Tribune*, 14 September 1988, p 5; 'Iraq likely to rebuff UN over gas attack inquiry', *Financial Times*, 14 September 1988, p 24; 'Demands for UN investigation', *New York Times*, 16 September 1988, p A11.

[4] Michael Kallenbach and Anton La Guardia, 'Iraq asked by UN to let in poison gas inquiry team', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 September 1988, p 13.

19880913

**Q 13 September 1988** The UN Secretary-General asks Iraq to admit a team of experts to investigate the reports of poison-gas use against Kurdish guerrillas; if access is denied, the team, which is still being assembled, may instead seek to inspect Kurdish camps in Turkey. A joint UNHCR/International Red Cross team that had visited Kurdish refugees in north-west Iran says it has found no evidence of the CW attacks which the refugees had reported. [1] [Note: this seems to be the first time the Secretary-General has formally asked Iraq to allow UN inspectors to enter that country, having previously always insisted that UN inspectors must be invited to enter by Iraq.]

Iraq refuses entry to the UN team. [2]

[1] Michael Kallenbach and Anton La Guardia, 'Iraq asked by UN to let in poison gas inquiry team', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 September 1988, p 13; 'Der Irak will kurdische Dorfer auflassen', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 September 1988.

[2] Seva Ulman, 'Red Cross probes chemical weapons charges against Iraq', *United Press International*, 28 September 1988

19880926

**26 September 1988** President Reagan calls for a meeting of the Geneva Protocol states parties. Addressing the UN General Assembly, he says: 'The use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war ... jeopardises the moral and legal strictures that have held these weapons in check since the First World War. Let this tragedy spark reaffirmation of the Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of chemical weapons. I call upon the signatories to that protocol, as well as other concerned states, to convene a conference to consider actions that we can take together to reverse the serious erosion of this treaty'. [1] It is not immediately clear what sort of conference he has in mind, [2] although State Department officials had, some days earlier, told journalists that the United States had begun 'sounding out other major nations about convening an international conference to roll back the growing use and threat of poison gas attacks'. [3] Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze tells the General Assembly that the Soviet Union 'takes a positive view of the proposal' [4] and tells the media that it is 'a very good idea'. [5] The British Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, also expresses support. [6]

President Mitterrand responds to the proposal by telling the General Assembly 'my country, the depositary of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, naturally favours a meeting of the 110 signatories to that agreement. The purpose of such a meeting, in our view, would be to solemnly reaffirm the commitment not to use chemical weapons, to prevent their proliferation, to encourage new accessions to the Protocol, to improve investigative procedures — in short, to indicate a common desire for the success of the work currently being carried out at Geneva within the context of the Conference on Disarmament.' [7]

Neither Iran nor Iraq makes any reference to this proposal in their General Assembly plenary speeches. [8]

Later in the day, President Mitterrand states that France is prepared to host the conference in Paris. [9] The initial suggestion in that it may be held in December, [10] but soon a decision is reached to convene it for 7–11 January. [11]

[1] Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, speech to the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, 26 September 1988, A/43/PV.4, p. 33. The text is also distributed as no 1109 in the State Department *Current Policy* series under the title 'Prospects for a new era of world peace' with some minor variations, such as the use of the term 'World War I' in place of 'the First World War' in the above quote.

[2] Lou Cannon (from UN New York), 'Reagan urges halt to use of poison gas', *Washington Post*, 27 September 1988; John H Cushman, Jr (from Washington), 'Chemical arms plan called a stopgap', *New York Times*, 28 September 1988, p A4.

[3] Don Oberdorfer, 'US tests waters for conference on poison gas', *Washington Post*, 21 September 1988, p 23.

[4] Eduard Shevardnadze, USSR Foreign Minister, speech to the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, 28 September 1988, A/43/PV.6, p. 73.

[5] Julie Johnson (from UN New York), 'US asks stiff ban on chemical arms', *New York Times*, 27 September 1988, pp A1 & A10.

[6] Sir Geoffrey Howe, UK Foreign Secretary, speech to the 43rd UN General Assembly, 28 September 1988, A/43/PV.8, p. 62-3.

[7] Francois Mitterrand, President of France, speech the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, 30 September 1988, A/43/PV.10, p. 11-12.

[8] Mr Ali Akbar Velayati, Foreign Minister of Iran, speech to the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, 30 September 1988, A/43/PV.14, p. 59-82 and Tariq Aziz, Foreign Minister of Iraq, speech to the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, 6 October 1988, A/43/PV.17, p. 144-60.

[9] Paul Lewis (from UN New York), 'Mitterrand asks sanctions against users of poison gas', *New York Times*, 30 September 1988; Charles

Lescaut and Claire Trean (from New York), '[Paris to host the conference on chemical disarmament]', *Le Monde*, 1 October 1988, pp 1 & 4.

[10] [no author listed], 'Paris to hold chemical war meeting', *International Herald Tribune*, 1-2 October 1988, p 2.

[11] French speech to the First Committee, 20 October 1988

19890107

**7 January 1989** A five-day meeting of 'States Parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and other interested States' convenes in Paris under the title of 'Conference on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons'. The Paris Conference had been called for as a reaction to the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq War and as a means to encourage negotiations on a Chemical Weapons Convention [see 26 September 1988]. A total of 149 states participate in the conference, around half of them represented by their most senior foreign ministers.

Tariq Aziz, speaking for Iraq, makes no comment on his own country's use of chemical weapons, but says 'Iraq believes that any call for a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons must be coupled with a parallel and similar call for a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons'. [1] This leads to accusations that Iraq is diverting attention from its chemical weapons use. [2] Other Arab states support this Iraqi position. Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmet Abdel-Maguid, for example, says: 'Any progress on banning chemical weapons is tied to the conclusion of a parallel ban on nuclear arms'. [3]

Ali Akbar Velayati, speaking for Iran, tells the conference that technology had improved sharply after 1984 when only mustard gas was used. He says that of the 50 000 Iranian casualties caused by chemical warfare, 80 per cent were due to modern nerve agents. [4]

The Paris Conference ends with adoption by consensus of a Final Declaration that had been negotiated in a Committee of the Whole chaired by Finnish Foreign Minister Kalevi Sorsa. In the declaration, the participating states 'solemnly declare ... [they] are determined to prevent any recourse to chemical weapons by completely eliminating them. They solemnly affirm their commitments not to use chemical weapons and condemn such use. ... The States Parties to the Protocol solemnly reaffirm the prohibition as established in it. They call upon all States which have not yet done so to accede to the Protocol. ... They further reaffirm their full support for the [UN] Secretary-General in carrying out his responsibilities for investigations in the event of alleged violations of the Geneva Protocol. They express their wish for early completion of the work undertaken to strengthen the efficiency of existing procedures and call for the co-operation of all States, in order to facilitate the action of the Secretary-General.' [5]

[1] James M Markham (from Paris), 'Arabs link curbs on gas and A-arms', *New York Times*, 9 January 1989, p A4.

[2] Elizabeth Ricci (from Paris), 'Iraqi Sidesteps Chemical Weapons Allegations', *United Press International*, 8 January 1989; Paul Webster (from Paris), 'Iraq refuses total ban on gas warfare', *Guardian* (London), 9 January 1989.

[3] Andrew Borowiec (from Paris), 'Soviets to destroy chemical weapons', *Washington Times*, 9 January 1989, p 1.

[4] Elizabeth Ricci (from Paris), 'Iraqi Sidesteps Chemical Weapons Allegations', *United Press International*, 8 January 1989; Paul Webster (from Paris), 'Iraq refuses total ban on gas warfare', *Guardian* (London), 9 January 1989.

[5] Text from Paris Conference document CPC/6 of 11 January 1989.

Please note that this is a snapshot of elements from the Iraq chronology that relate specifically to UN and other investigations into allegations of use of chemical weapons of the period during the Iran-Iraq war. It has been extracted and circulated in draft form in order to assist understanding of developments relating to Syria as they unfold as the UN investigation in Syria is built on precedents from the 1980s. Entries are updated on a regular basis, therefore, ***please check with the author before quoting or citing as more information on any particular event may have become available.*** Comments are welcome.

Copies of the Syria chronology will be made available via <<http://www.cbw-events.org.uk/syria.html>>.

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The Iraq chronology is being prepared in cooperation with Julian Perry Robinson of the Harvard Sussex Program.

#### **Entry formatting**

As this is a working draft there are a number of types of entry: finished entries, based on the information available at the time; those have been put in place as a holding entries; and those containing something that needs checking or adding to. The entries in the above categories appear thus:

**00 XXXXXXX 0000** An entry considered ready for publication — i.e., with content and cross-referencing complete, although still subject to change if new information becomes available.

**H 00 XXXXXXX 0000** [Holding entry, essentially rough information to help build the details of the chronology and needing further work — text is included in square brackets.]

**Q 00 XXXXXXX 0000** An entry containing something needing checking factually (or further information to be obtained), or which contains suggested edits to be considered. May also include changes or corrections that should be entered into the *CBW Events* source files.