Iraq and Chemical & Biological Warfare: A Chronology of Events Volume I — 1960s to 1990

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Sample file

1988

(First Quarter)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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As with any compilation of this size, there is always a difficulty in deciding at what point to stop collating material and organize and refine the document for publication.

This working draft is, of neccessity therefore, a snapshot of the progress towards the final publication. The intention for producing working drafts is to enable reviews of the work in progress. As the final publication format has yet to be decided, sample files are being posted in the form of quarterly sub-sets of the draft chronologies. Those interested in reviewing or contributing to fuller drafts are encouraged to contact Richard Guthrie at <ri>crichard@cbw-events.org.uk>.

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Introduction

Sources and methodology

The information gathered for this chronology comes from open-source documentation (such as news reports, academic papers, published governmental and inter-governmental reports, and national archives). As in any exercise such as this, the compilation of material has been a collective effort.

Chronology entries

All chronology entries are written in the present tense. Entries for the same date are put in the sequence of events that happened (if specific times are known) or are placed in the order that dawn rises around the world. This means that entries for Japan, for example, will appear before Iran, which will appear before Iraq, which will appear before Germany. Specific times for events are given in GMT/UTC, where known, and local time if that has been specified.

Holding entries are preceding by the letter 'H' to indicate this status. Entries with outstanding queries relating to them are preceded by the letter 'Q'.

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.
- Q 30 January 1988 Speaker Rafsanjani, meeting with the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, praises a recent 'British Foreign Office report' that, he says, states Iraq started the war with Iran and was the first to deploy chemical weapons. He states that Iran has not used chemical weapons. [1] [*what FCO report is this?? Recast when acquired*]

Iranian sources quote from the report extensively [*note these quotes will have been translated into Farsi and back into English — compare with original when found!!*] 'Since the signing of the Algiers agreement, signed by the governments of Iran and Iraq, until 1979 when the Shah was overthrown in Iran, the two countries' relations continued in a correct manner and relations continued likewise until six months after the Iranian revolution. But in 1979, the Iraqi press reported inter-communical troubles in the Iranian province of Khuzestan, in which Arabs live and which is situated on the southern frontiers. After that relations between the two countries gradually began to deteriorate until, in late September, Iraq committed aggression against Iran. Thus, Iraq captured vast areas of Khuzestan as well as considerable other areas of Iranian territory along the border'. And: 'In March 1984, for the first time the Security Council confirmed the use of chemical weapons by Iraq an act which was condemned' [see 30 March 1984].[2]

- [1] Tehran home service, 1630 GMT 30 January 1988, as reported in 'Iran's Rafsanjani's Meeting with the Soviet Ambassador on Resolution 598 and Afghanistan', BBC-SWB, 2 February 1988, ME/0064/A/1.
- [2] Tehran home service, 0740 GMT 14 February 1988, as reported in 'Tehran Radio says UK has "admitted" that Iraq was the aggressor hopes for better relations with France', BBC-SWB, 16 February 1988, ME/0076/A/1.
- **23 February 1988** A junior minister from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, David Mellor, arrives in Baghdad for the start of a three-day visit.[1] He meets with Saddam Hussein on the middle day of his visit; a meeting that results in agreement by Iraq to release a British national, John Smith, being held in that country.[2]

- A month later Mellor writes to a Member of Parliament stating 'I raised the issue of human rights and the use of chemical weapons and left the Iraqi regime in no doubt about our views'.[3] Some years later, Mellor and the Scott Inquiry into export of dual-use items engage in correspondence about what happened during this visit. On chemical weapons issues, Mellor states 'I raised them with Tariq Aziz, then Iraqi Foreign Minister. He of course denied they had done this (but he would wouldn't he)and blamed quite a lot of this on misreporting by the BBC!'[4]
- [1] Mark Lennox-Boyd, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 28 February 1991, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 186, c581-82, in response to Bob Cryer MP.
- [2] Mark Lennox-Boyd, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Written Answer, 28 February 1991, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 186, c580, in response to Bob Cryer MP.
- [3] David Mellor, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, letter to Michael Meacher MP, dated 30 March 1988. The letter itself does not seem to have been released by the Scott Inquiry as part of the evidence collected, but it is quoted in a letter from Christopher Muttukumaru of the Inquiry team to David Mellor, dated 29 June 1993, which was released in 1996.
- [4] Undated reply from David Mellor to Christopher Muttukumaru's letter of 29 June 1993, released in 1996.
- **29 February 1988** In Iraq, Kurdish villages in northern Al-Sulaymaniyah province are reported by Iranian military sources to have come under chemical and other forms of attack by Iraqi forces; more than 400 chemical weapons casualties are said to have occured, the majority Kurdish women and children.[1]
- [1] Ramadan Headquarters, Ground Forces of the IRGC, as quoted on Tehran domestic service, 1630 GMT 1 March 1988, as translated from the Persian in FBIS-NES-88-041, 2 March 1988, p. 60
- **29 February 1988** Tehran is struck by the first of what is later estimated to have been 189 of the new Iraqi Al-Hussein missiles stretched Scuds (with payloads reduced to maybe 190 kg of high explosive) launched against it over a seven-week period, the 'war of the cities'.[1] Iran had sporadically been firing Scud-B missiles against Baghdad since 12 March 1985.[2] [See also 8 October 1987]

[*Note*: This comes at a time of intensification of attacks on civilian targets on each side. Numerous complaints are made by each side to the United Nations Secretary-General.[3]]

- [1] W Seth Carus and Joseph S Bermudez Jr, 'Iraq's Al-Husayn missile programme', *Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review*, vol 2 no 5 (May 1990) pp 204-9, and vol 2 no 6 (June 1990) pp 242-48.
- [2] W Seth Carus and Joseph S Bermudez Jr, 'Iran's growing missile forces', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 23 July 1988, pp 126–31.
- [3] Over the next 14 days alone, allegations of attacks on civilian areas made by Iran include UN documents S/19550, S/19563, S/19594, S/19595 and S/19603; and by Iraq include S/19551, S/19554, S/19580, S/19581, S/19590, S/19591, S/19601 and S/19602.
- **1 March 1988** The US Congress hears the following testimony from the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral William O Studeman: 'Worldwide, some 10 countries possess a chemical warfare capability. As many are known or thought to be actively seeking it. ... In the Middle East, Iraq has used chemical weapons in its war with Iran at least since 1983, and Iran has been

attempting to develop its own chemical capability'.[1] [See also 23 March 1987.]

[1] RADM William O Studeman [Director of Naval Intelligence], prepared statement ('Intelligence issues') before the Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, 1 March 1988.

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.

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 minuimum, in excess of 3200.[6]

It later becomes clear that these attacks are carried out in parallel with a wider campaign known as 'Anfal'.[7] Tehran Radio claims that Iraq had resorted to using chemical weapons as it was 'totally disappointed because of repeated defeats'.[8]

Accounts of both survivors and Iranian officials indicate that Iraqi warplanes bomb the town with a combination of conventional and chemical weapons during 16 and 17 March, with the Iraqi soldiers of the Halabja garrison having surrendered to Kurdish irregular forces the day before. Iranian soldiers enter Halabja not long before Iraqi aircraft begin bombing with chemical weapons. The Iranian soldiers have access to protective equipment, meaning many survive the chemical weapons attack. Iranian doctors, treating hundreds of survivors, said the cloud contained a mixture of mustard gas and cyanide gas, with unknown nerve agents mixed in as well. The injured suffered from chemical burns from the mustard gas on their skin, eyes and lungs.[9]

Further reports suggest chemical weapons are also deployed from systems other than aircraft. Iranian Revolutionary Guards spokesman Ali Shafii is quoted as saying 'Iraqis, using planes and artillery equipped with chemical weapons releasing mustard gas, cyanide and other types, caused 5000 innocent people of Halabja and the area to die'.[10]

Some eight months later, a senior member of the Iraqi Government, Vice President Taha Muhyi al-Din Ma'ruf, admits Iraqi use of chemical weapons at Halabja.[11]

- [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).
- [7] Dlawer Abdul Aziz Ala' Aldeen, *Death Clouds: Saddam Hussein's Chemical War Against the Kurds*, January 1991; Human Rights Watch, *Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (Yale University Press, 1995).
- [8] Tehran radio, 17 March 1988, as reported in 'Gulf war Iran "Liberates" more towns; Khomeyni comments on missile attacks', BBC-SWB, 18 March 1988, ME/0103/i.
- [9] 'Iraqi Poison Gas Attack Kills Kurds in Iraqi Town; Town Bombed After Capture by Iran', *Facts on File*, 1 April 1988, p. 215, F2
- [10] Andrew Bilski, 'Under a cloud of death', *Maclean's*, 4 April 1988, p.18.
- [11] Statement of Taha Muhyi al-Din Ma'ruf, Vice President of Iraq, at a press luncheon in Paris, as reported in *Le Monde*, 10 November 1988, p 12.

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.
- 17 March 1988 New groups of Iraqi Kurdish refugees arrive in Iran, bringing the total number to 9000 during the week, so IRNA reports. The agency says that the refugees, all from villages in Sulaimaniyah, northern Iraq, were forced to flee their homes because of recent Iraqi attacks, including chemical bombardment and shelling of the villages. One refugee, Abdullah Mohammad Ali, tells IRNA that many villagers in Sulaimaniyah were killed or wounded in chemical attacks.[1]
- [1] IRNA (from Sanandaj, Kurdistan province), 0721 GMT 17 March 1988, as reported in 'Iran: In Brief; Arrival of Iraqi Kurdish Refugees', BBC-SWB, 19 March 1988, ME/0104/A/1.
- **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.]
 - **20 March 1988** More than 20 attacks with cyanide, mustard, and unidentified nerve agents have been carried out against Kurdish communities in northeastern Iraq in the recent campaign against the Kurds by Iraqi forces, Tehran Radio claims.[1]

Iranian officials claim that 1000 Kurds have been airlifted to hospitals in Tehran to receive medical treatment and call upon the Red Cross and other similar organizations for humanitarian aid.[2]

Tehran requests help from Indian doctors in treating victims of chemical weapons. Iran's Consul General in Hyderabad puts the number of Iranian civilians killed in Iraqi attacks with chemical weapons on border towns in the hundreds.[3]

- [1] Tehran Radio, 20 March 1988, as reported in 'Gulf War Missiles and Land Battles; Iraqis Raid Kharg', BBC-SWB, 21 March 1988, ME/0105/i.
- [2] Ed Blanche (from Nicosia), 'Iran Claims Iraqi Chemical Attack Kills 5,000; Iraq Reports Missile Attack', Associated Press, 20 March 1988.
- [3] New Delhi Home Service, 1530 GMT 20 March 1988, as reported in 'Other Reports; Iran Seeks Help from India for Chemical Weapon Victims', BBC-SWB, 22 March 1988, FE/0106/A4/1.
- **21 March 1988** Iranian authorities fly a party of Western journalists some 40 kilometres into Iraq to Halabja and the surrounding area [see 16 March]. The journalists film, photograph and report seeing many corpses lying in the streets, including those of young families, apparently dead from quick-acting poison gas.[1] There is widespread coverage of this visit in the following days.

Many descriptions of what is found in the town are published. 'The skin of the bodies is strangely discoloured, with their eyes open and staring where they have not disappeared into their sockets, a greyish slime oozing from their mouths and their fingers still grotesquely twisted. Death seemingly caught them almost unawares in the midst of their household chores. They had just the strength, some of them, to make it to the doorways of their homes, only to collapse there or a few feet beyond. Here a mother seems to clasp her children in a last embrace, there an old man shields an infant from he cannot have known what'.[2] 'But the starkest and most gruesome scenes of this lush valley flanked by snow-crested peaks are the faces of the noncombatant dead: four small girls in traditional dress lying like discarded dolls by a trickling stream below Anap [a hamlet near Halabja]; two women cuddling in death by a flower garden; an old man in a turban clutching a baby on a doorstep.'[3] 'Many of the rotting corpses had been left unburied for one week so our group could see them'.[4]

Eyewitness accounts are given. Haj Ali Rasa, 50, is quoted as saying 'the white clouds came from the Iraqi planes'.[5] A middle-aged man tells a reporter 'The Iranians came here and we welcomed them. Then, about noon time, the [Iraqi] bombardment came. Everybody was killed. I saw a cloud. I saw gas'.[6] Dr Sayyid Furutan describes some of the weapons believed to have been used — pointing to what is said to be the remnants of a cyanide container, he says 'one bomb holds a hundred litres and on a cold day the vapour can quickly spread 500 metres. These people had no chance'. He says in other areas of the town planes dropped nerve and mustard gases. 'You can save the victims of nerve gas if you treat them quickly, and we saved many'.[7] The containers are assessed as having a 100 litre capacity.[8]

- [1] Nicholas Beeston (from Halabja), 'Hundreds die in Iraqi chemical attack on Kurds' *Times* (London), 22 March 1988.
- [2] David Hirst (from Halabja), 'Iran Puts Dead on Show after Gas Raid: The Kurdish Victims Caught Unaware by Cyanide', *Guardian* (London), 22 March 1988.
- [3] Patrick Tyler (from Halabja), 'Poison attack kills hundreds', Washington Post,
- [4] Theodore Stanger (from Halabja), 'Massacre in Halabja', *Newsweek*, 4 April 1988 p 19 [international edition, p 38 in US edition].
- [5] Paul Koring (from Halabja), 'Halabja a picture of death after Iraqi poison-gas attack', *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 24 March 1988, p. A1.
- [6] Patrick Worsnip (from Halabja), Reuters, as in: 'Gas bombing empties town of life', *Chicago Tribune*, 24 March 1988, p. 5.
- [7] David Hirst (from Halabja), 'Iran Puts Dead on Show after Gas Raid: The Kurdish Victims Caught Unaware by Cyanide', *Guardian* (London), 22 March 1988.
- [8] Norman Kirkham [of the *Daily Telegraph*] (from Halabja), 'Iraqi Gas Leaves "a Modern Pompeii", *Washington Times*, 23 March 1988, p. 1; David Fairhall, 'Secret contents of the airborne canisters of death', *The Guardian* (London), 24 March 1988, p 23.
- **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.

21 March 1988 The Foreign Ministers of the member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference convene for a four-day meeting in Amman, Jordan. Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati refuses to attend owing to Jordan's support for Iraq in the war, sending instead a message to the OIC's Secretary-General, Sharifuddin Pirzada, regarding the recent attacks on Halabja and neighbouring communities which notes the organization's silence on the issue.[1]

The OIC adopts a resolution on the Iran–Iraq War which calls on Iran to accept UN Security Council resolution 598 [see 20 July 1987] but makes no mention of use of chemical weapons during the conflict,[2] unlike some previous OIC resolutions [see 22 December 1984].

- [1] Tehran Radio, 22 March 1988, as reported in 'ICO Meeting Opens in Amman; Iranian Boycott', BBC-SWB, 23 March 1988, ME/0107/i.
- [2] The resolution is reproduced as an appendix to *Letter Dated* 30 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/19721, 31 March 1988.

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.

22 March 1988 Thirty to forty Kurdish demonstrators take over the headquarters of the British Red Cross in protest about global inaction regarding recent chemicals weapons attacks in Kurdish areas of Iraq.[1] John Jerram, marketing director of the British Red Cross, tells the press from his office 'They want to know that the Red Cross is doing everything to help ... The group has not used force or taken over the building'.[2]

There are many other demonstrations across Europe. For example, the following day a four-hour sit-in takes place at the London office of the League of Arab States.[3] On 25 March Kurdish demonstrators occupy the London offices of Air France,[4] threatening to soak their clothes with kerosene and set themselves alight if anyone tries to remove them. The occupation ends when the French ambassador agrees to meet with the protestors.[5]

Mounted police drive back a large crowd of protestors from the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm.[6]. Hundreds of Kurds hold a vigil outside the US Embassy in London. One protestor is quoted as saying 'America is a superpower and it is allowing smaller nations to act this way'.[7] On 28 March shots are fired during a demonstration outside the Iraqi Embassy in Vienna. A police spokesman indicates that the shots are believed to have come from inside the Embassy. Sixty-four protestors are arrested.[8] Protestors are said to have smashed windows at the Embassy and to have pushed around Embassy workers.[9]

A month later, a march takes place in Moscow, passing through Red Square, although it is broken up by Soviet police before it reaches the Iraqi Embassy.[10]

- [1] Shyama Perera, 'Kurds seize Red Cross HQ', *Guardian* (London), 23 March 1988, p 2; [no author listed], [no title], *Daily Telegraph* (London), 26 March 1988, p 1
- [2] [no author listed], [no title], Times (London), 23 March 1988, p 24
- [3] [no author listed] (from Tehran), Reuter, as in: 'Iran chemical war threat', *Guardian* (London), 24 March 1988, p 24.
- [4] [no author listed], 'Kurds protest', *Times* (London), 26 March 1988, p 4.
- [5] [no author listed] (from New York), Reuter, as in: 'Iran may boycott Gulf peace talks', *Guardian* (London), 26 March 1988, p. 7
- [6] [no author listed], AFP, as in: 'Swedish protest against Iraqi chemical attack', *Times* (London), 28 March 1988, p 8.
- [7] [no author listed] (from Vienna), 'Austrians trash Iraq Embassy', *Washington Times*, 29 March 1988, p 9.
- [8] [no author listed] (from Vienna), Associated Press, as in: 'Shots Fired at Vienna Kurdish Rally', *International Herald Tribune*, 29 March 1988, p 2.
- [9] [no author listed] (from Vienna), 'Austrians trash Iraq Embassy', Washington Times, 29 March 1988, p 9.
- [10] [no author listed] (from Moscow), Reuters, as in: 'Moscow Allows Kurdish Students To March in Protest of Gas Attack', *International Herald Tribune*, 27 April 1988, p 6.

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.

Q 23 March 1988 In Washington, US State Department spokesman Charles Redman says of the Halabja episode [see 16 March] that it 'appears to be a particularly grave violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol', and that 'there are indications that Iran may also have used chemical artillery shells in this fighting.' He declines to elaborate this statement.[1]

The Special Security Office of the US Defense Intelligence Agency states, 'Most of the casualties in Halabja were reportedly caused by cyanogen chloride. This agent has never been used by Iraq, but Iran has shown interest in it. Mustard gas casualties in the town were probably caused by Iraqi weapons because Iran has never been noted using that agent'.[2] [Note: (1) it is not clear when this was made public; (2) see 24 April 1985, 12 March 1986 and 6 May 1987 for details of UN investigation reports that discuss possible use by Iraq of cyanide weapons; and see 17 February 1986 for discussion of medical opinion of possible Iraqi use of cyanide.]

Other US sources are less specific, for example, one newspaper reports 'A US official said the evidence collected by US intelligence agencies of purported Iranian chemical warfare was far less convincing than the startling evidence of Iraqi chemical attacks provided by television cameras that filmed scores of dead Iraqi Kurds in the northern Iraqi border town of Halabja'.[3]

- [1] [No author listed] (from Washington), [no title], United Press International, 24 March 1988; [No author listed] (from Washington), 'US condemns use of chemical weapons in Iran-Iraq war', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 23 March 1988, ref. 0323001.
- [2] United States Defense Intelligence Agency, Special Security Offices, 'Iran-Iraq: war update', 23 March 1988, Envelope PTTSZYUW RUEKJCS2867 0850428-SSS-RUEALGX, as cited in Jean Pascal Zanders, 'Allegations of Iranian Chemical Weapons use in the 1980-88 Gulf War', SIPRI research note, 21 March 2001. [*get original*]
- [3] David B. Ottaway with Michelle Hall, 'US Decries Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons', Washington Post, 24 March 1988, p. A37.

24 March 1988 Speaker Rafsanjani tells a press conference: 'we see that in the UN and Security Council, the USA and France are preventing the dispatch of UN experts. By claiming that Iran may have also used chemical weapons, the Americans have cast the first shadow of doubt' [see 23 March].[1] Elsewhere he is quoted as saying at the press conference 'The United States has condemned this [the Iraqi use of chemical weapons], and in this regard we would like to express our thanks to that government'.[2] While he is talking in the parliament building, a missile attack strikes Tehran

causing the windows to shake and the reported deaths of ten people and injuries to 100 others.[3]

In a separate press conference, Iranian officials present 28 Iraqi Army officers said to have witnessed Iraqi aircraft drop chemical weapons on Halabja [see 16 March]. One officer, Brig. Gen. Nather Hussein Mustafa, captured by Iranian troops shortly before the air attack, is said to have indicated he was three miles from Halabja when three Iraqi aircraft dropped chemical weapons.[4]

- [1] Tehran Television, 24 March 1988, as reported in 'Iran: Rafsanjani News Conference on Iraqi Chemical Warfare, Hostages in Lebanon', BBC-SWB, 26 March 1988, ME/0110/A/1.
- [2] Patrick E Tyler (from Tehran), 'Iranian Thanks U.S. For Condemning Iraq', *Washington Post*, 25 March 1988.
- [3] David Hirst (from Tehran), 'Iran blasts West over gas attack', *The Guardian* (London), 25 March 1988.
- [4] Patrick E Tyler (from Tehran), 'Iranian Thanks U.S. For Condemning Iraq', *Washington Post*, 25 March 1988.

24 March 1988 The villages of Seyo and Senan in the Darbandikhan district of northeastern Iraq are attacked with chemical weapons by Iraqi planes, killing at least 50 people and wounding many others, according to the Kurdish Democratic Party. The KDP leader Massoud Barzani appeals for urgent medical aid from the international community.[1]

[1] Alex Efty (from Nicosia), 'Kurdish Rebels Appeal for Aid to Cope With Iraqi Poison Gas Attacks', Associated Press, 25 March 1988; Paul Alexander (from UN New York), 'UN to Examine Victims of Chemical Weapons in Iran–Iraq War', Associated Press, 26 March 1988; Andrew Bilski, 'Under a cloud of death', *Maclean's*, 4 April 1988, p.18.

24 March 1988 In an editorial, *The Guardian* notes 'Iraq's ambassador to London has done his best, mainly by surfacing on almost every known national news broadcast in 12 hours, to deny his country's latest and greatest war-crime. His best, however, is not nearly good enough, even if the British Government could only say yesterday, as it condemned the atrocity, that it had no independent evidence of who was guilty'. The paper observes 'we are somewhat better placed than the ambassador to assess the likely origin and effects of the bombing because our own David Hirst was in a group of western reporters taken to [Halabja] this week by Iranians [see 21 March] (evidence of their presence in strength in the area). Like the subsequent televison film, his description of a ghost-town littered with unmarked corpses was unusually horrifying, even in an age of worldwide public violence'.[1]

In the news section of the paper, *The Guardian* reports 'There is little doubt that the Iranian and Kurdish versions of the tragedy are essentially correct. ... The attack on Halabja comes in the wake of persistent Kurdish claims that dozens of villages and towns have been attacked in this manner over recent years'.[2] The paper also quotes the director of the UK's Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down, Graham Pearson, who had examined television footage, as saying: 'Nothing in the film is incompatible with the alegation that cyanide was used, but from this evidence one could not rule out other agents'.[3]

[1] 'The Town Where Thousands Died' (editorial), *The Guardian* (London), 24 March 1988, p 24 [also reproduced in *Guardian Weekly*, 3 April 1988, p. 12.].

- [2] Vahe Petrossian, 'Iraq's Weapons of Terror: The Course of the War', *The Guardian* (London), 24 March 1988, p 23.
- [3] David Fairhall, 'Secret contents of the airborne canisters of death', *The Guardian* (London), 24 March 1988, p 23.
- 25 March 1988 Iranian military communiqués report that Marivan has come under attack from chemical weapons bombs, injuring seven people.[1] Another report describes an attack at a 'village near Paveh',[2] although the confusion of war could mean that these reports refer to the same incident. The son of a senior Iranian figure becomes a casualty of today's Iraqi attacks with chemical weapons, according to Iranian claims. Yaser Hashemi Rafsanjani, the 16-year-old son of the Majlis Speaker, is said to have received injuries during fighting in Sulaymaniyah province.[3] A second casualty, Amir Mohammadi Khomeiniha, described variously as Iran's Prosecutor General or as the son of the person holding that post, is also receving hospital treatment for chemical weapons injuries.[4]
- [1] IRNA, 1632 GMT 25 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 31 March 1988, ME/0114/A/1
- [2] IRNA, 1633 GMT 26 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 31 March 1988, ME/0114/A/1.
- [3] [no author listed] (from Vienna), Reuters, as in 'Sad Aftermath of Chemical Warfare; 30 Gas Victims Flown to West', *Toronto Star*, 29 March 1988, p. A1.
- [4] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Accuses Iraq of Using Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 29 March 1988, ref 0329157; [no author listed] (from Vienna), Reuters, as in 'Sad Aftermath of Chemical Warfare; 30 Gas Victims Flown to West', *Toronto Star*, 29 March 1988, p. A1.

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.
- **H 25 March 1988** ['The (UK) government source said Iran's only diplomat in Britain, charge d'affaires Mohammed Zadeh Basti, called on Foreign Office officials Friday 'at his own request' to seek British condemnation of Iraqi chemical weapon attacks on Iranian forces' Ed Lion (from London), 'Britain seeks information on Waite', UPI, 25 March 1988.]
 - **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.
- **26 March 1988** Iraqi planes drop what are described as 'highly toxic chemical bombs' on the Kurdish city of Karadagh, killing 64 and wounding 210, so a spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan claims, in attacks that continue into the following day. Karadagh is described as being 'about 15 miles south of the provincial capital of Sulaimaniya'. The spokesman goes on to say the same chemical weapons were used recently against two villages occupied by Kurdish forces near the Dukan dam, north of Sulaimaniya, forcing the occupants to flee.[1] A PUK spokesman says 'the Iraqis recently used chemical weapons against the two villages off Bargarlou and Sargarlou, near the dam' and that, although PUK forces had pulled out of the villages since the chemical attack, 'the Iraqi troops have also not been able to occupy the villages, because there is still gas there'. The group claims 'The Iraqis are waging a war of genocide against our people'.[2]
- [1] [No author listed] (from Athens), 'Iraq Reportedly Used Chemical Bombs against Kurds', United Press International, 31 March 1988.
- [2] Ralph Joseph, '64 die in new Iraqi gas attack on Kurds', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 2 April 1988, p 8.
- 27 March 1988 Two official Iraqi Army documents reportedly seized during a Kurdish attack on the military base at Deeralok two months previously are published by the London *Observer*, the paper having received the documents via the Kurdish Democratic Party. One purports to be a letter from Arbil district headquarters to all 24th Battalion units requiring a half-yearly stocktaking of biological and chemical weapons. The second is a telegram from one Iraqi military commander in Kurdistan to another stating that the KDP has acquired 4000 gas-masks and that 'saboteurs will wear them when we use chemical weapons to attack their concentrations'.[1]

[1] Helga Graham, 'Exposed: Iraq's gas war', *Observer* (London), 27 March 1988, p 25.

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 qas 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/i.
- [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.
- **29 March 1988** The head of the Iraqi News Agency's Cairo office, Nuri Nayef, says 'an authorized Iraqi spokesman' had told him that 'Iraq might choose a number of large Iranian cities to be the targets of chemical weapons as a deterrent and punitive measure'.[1]
- [1] Associated Press (from Nicosia), as in: 'Iraq, Saying It Hit Tankers, Threatens Chemical Strikes', *International Herald Tribune*, 30 March 1988, p. 2.
- **29 March 1988** Thirty casualties from the town of Halabja, [see 16 March] all alleged to be affected by chemical weapons, are sent from Iran to Frankfurt, Geneva, London, New York and Vienna in order that they may receive medical treatment.[1] One casualty, a 45-year-old woman, dies on the way to the airport.[2] [See also 19 January 1987.]

One child, two men and three women arrive in Vienna to receive treatment for their injuries. Dr. Gerhard Freilinger [see 17 February 1986], attending to them at Vienna's University Clinic states that their injuries leads him to believe they were exposed to mustard gas 'in combination with a "light" nerve gas, because they all have bad headaches, are dizzy, and (some) may have been unconscious'.[3]

The casualties arriving in New York are exceptionally issued with US visas on humanitarian grounds.[4] They are described as three girls, aged 9, 9 and 12, a 25-year-old man and a 30-year-old woman.[5]

The next day, the Swiss Government announces that four Swiss medical volunteers have departed for Iran to treat casualties of recent alleged Iraqi chemical weapons attacks. The volunteers are expected to stay 10 days in Tehran, Tabris and Isfahan.[6]

- [1] [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Accuses Iraq of Using Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 29 March 1988, ref 0329157; [no author listed] (from Vienna), Reuters, as in 'Sad Aftermath of Chemical Warfare; 30 Gas Victims Flown to West', *Toronto Star*, 29 March 1988, p. A1.
- [2] Lee Stokes (from Athens), 'West Germany offers Iran medical aid for chemical gas victims' United Press International, 29 March 1988; [no author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iran Accuses Iraq of Using Chemical Weapons', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 29 March 1988, ref 0329157.
- [3] Teddie Weyr (from Vienna), 'Kurds Apparently Suffering from Mustard Gas Wounds Arrive for Treatment', Associated Press, 29 March 1988; Ben Dobbin (from London), 'Kurds In Europe New York For Treatment Of Apparent Gas Wounds', Associated Press, 29 March 1988.
- [4] [no author listed] (from UN New York), 'Kurdistan Chemical Weapons Victims Arrive in New York', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 31 March 1988, ref 0331049.
- [5] Jennifer A Kingson, 'Victims of Gulf War Treated at Queens Hospital', *New York Times*, 6 April 1988.
- [6] [no author listed], Associated Press, as in: 'Chemical weapons aid', *Guardian* (London), 31 March 1988.
- **29 March 1988** The Iraqi ambassador to London Mohammed al-Mashat is summoned to the Foreign Office where senior official Alan Munro tells him that the UK is 'shocked' at the reports of chemical weapons use in Halabja and that this is a 'serious and grave' violation of international agreements covering human rights and the use of chemical weapons.[1]
- [1] [No author listed] (from London), 'Britain concerned about use of chemical weapons in Gulf', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 30 March 1988, ref 0330007.

30 March 1988 In London, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Geoffrey Howe, tells the House of Commons 'we have read with the greatest concern reports of Iraqi use of chemical weapons against villages in Kurdistan. If confirmed, and I see no reason to suppose that they will not be, they represent a significant increase in the use of these abhorrent and inhuman weapons. We have repeatedly made clear our condemnation of them and made representations specifically to the Iraqis ... myself in a conversation with the Iraqi Foreign Minister on 15 March and to the Iraqi ambassador in the Foreign Office only yesterday [see 29] March]. Beyond that we have worked within the European Community — we initiated this — to impose strict export controls on chemical weapons and on civil chemicals that might be used to produce them. ... I think that the whole House will share my sense of abhorrence at the use of these weapons in any circumstances in this or any other conflict'.[1]

Some minutes later, a junior Minister is asked if he agrees: 'that although he is right to condemn the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in Iraq, one problem has been that the British Government have maintained diplomatic relationships with both Iran and Iraq, and not very long ago extended a £200 million credit to the Government of Iraq, enabling them to prop up their economy and continue the prosecution of the war? Would it not he better if we withdrew all trade, aid and credits to both Iran and Iraq as a way of bringing to an end the war and the use of chemical weapons in the region?' The Minister responds: 'I think that that would he an entirely self-defeating exercise. The fact that we have diplomatic relations with Iraq, for example, has made possible a wide range of contacts, to the mutual benefit of both countries, and enabled us to play a constructive part in the efforts of the United Nations to try to bring the Gulf war to an end. As recently as yesterday, it enabled a deputy under-secretary at the Foreign Office to see the Iraqi ambassador, to protest in strong terms about the use of chemical wcapons, and to ask that his protest he reported back at the highest level Without diplomatic relations, such in Baghdad. exchanges would not be possible. The best way to stop the use of chemical weapons is to continue to protest through the channels available to us, as well as maintaining the present embargo to try to prevent all materials from Britain getting through that could be used in making such weapons'.[2]

- [1] Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Oral Answers,30 March 1988, *Hansard* (Commons), c1066-67, in response to Dafydd Elis Thomas MP; see also: [No author listed] (from London), 'Howe condemns use of chemical weapons in Gulf War', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 30 March 1988, ref 0330039.
- [2] David Mellor, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Oral Answers,30 March 1988, *Hansard* (Commons), c1070-72, in response to Jeremy Corbyn MP.
- **30 March 1988** The Iranian UN mission shows a 35-minute videotape of the Halabja attack to journalists. Iran says it films all military actions for analysis and as a matter of record. One paper reports the film in the following terms: 'First the film showed Iranian forces entering and touring a city. Then, in scenes filmed from a distance, explosions spread huge white clouds of gas over sections of the city. Finally the film showed another tour of the city, with corpses of civilians everywhere'.[1]
- [1] Marian Houk, 'Iran Enlists US Help in Treating Victims of Chemical Attack', *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 April 1988, p. 12.
- **31 March 1988** Tehran tests for the first time a warning system for chemical attacks in the city. The radio will broadcast three beeps, a pause, and three more beeps to alert them that Iraq has attacked Tehran with chemical weapons. Some one hundred Iraqi missiles have hit the city since the restarting of missile attacks on 29 February.[1]
- [1] Hanns Neuerbourg, 'After A Month of Missiles, Tehran Fears Poison Gas', Associated Press, 31 March 1988.
- **31 March 1988** Iraqi aircraft bomb 'two villages in the suburb of the Iranian border city of Marivan' with

chemical weapons today, killing and wounding a number people, so IRNA claims.[1]

Tehran Radio also reports that Iraqi planes dropped chemical agents on two villages near the border town of Marivan, but 'only three people were martyred' and three injured thanks to Iranian measures already taken.[2]

In a separate report, Tehran Radio claims that Iraqi mustard gas and nerve gas killed 75 people in the region of Qaradagh in the villages of Susiyan and Dukan on 21–22 March, and Balakha, Jafaran, and Oliyan on 23 March.[3]

- [1] [No author listed] (from Tehran), 'Iraq Drops Chemical Bombs on Iran Villages, Iran Says', Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 31 March 1988, ref 0331017.
- [2] Tehran Home Service, 1638 GMT 31 March 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 7 April 1988, ME/0119/A/1; Daniel J Silva (from Manama), 'Iraq Calls Temporary Halt to Bombing Iranian Cities', United Press International, 31 March 1988.
- [3] Tehran Home Service, 2039 GMT 1 April 1988, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiqués and Reports', BBC-SWB, 7 April 1988, ME/0119/A/1.
- **31 March 1988** A team visits Halabja [see 16 March] lead by Dr Daniel de Feurre, described as a specialist in toxic gases and special envoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross, according to the official Iranian news agency, which states that the doctor 'confirmed Halabja was certainly attacked by poisonous gases'.[1]
- [1] IRNA in English from Tehran, 1101 GMT 2 April 1988, as in FBIS-NES-88-064, 4 April 1988, p 54.