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Letter dated 24 March 1988 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

Upon instructions from my Government and pursuant to my previous letters concerning the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi régime, I have the honour to inform you that the Iraqi régime has persisted in attacking civilian quarters inside the Islamic Republic of Iran with chemical weapons.

On 22 March 1988, the suburbs of Sardasht and the villages of Namshaz, Tazvar, Valak and Ghal'eh-ji in the vicinity of Marivan became the latest targets of Iraqi chemical warfare. The chemical agents were employed in three separate aerial bombardments by 13 aircraft.

As a result of this latest Iraqi atrocity, 31 people have so far been martyred and 450 others seriously injured. The martyrs include a one-year-old child and an 80-year-old man.

It is indeed regrettable that the United Nations has remained indifferent not only when Iraq used chemical weapons against combatants but also when it resorted to the heinous crime of using chemical weapons against Iranian and Iraqi civilians. The history of the use of chemical weapons by the war criminals in Baghdad clearly illustrates the fact that the inaction of the United Nations - caused by political expediency - has only emboldened the Iraqi rulers to increase the intensity and gravity of their crimes. The recent systematic and large-scale use of chemical weapons against civilians is the most unfortunate illustration of the effects of past inaction on the part of the international community.

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Lack of immediate and effective action by the United Nations in the face of the latest unprecedented use of chemical weapons against civilians is yet another dangerous message as regards the impunity of war criminals. It is horrifying even to speculate how the Iraqi war criminals would interpret this message in planning and carrying out their future acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

In view of the above, the Islamic Republic of Iran once again requests the immediate dispatch of the United Nations team of experts on chemical weapons to the area without further delay.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 63 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad Ja'afar MAHALLATI
Ambassador
Acting Permanent Representative
