



Security Council

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LETTER DATED 16 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

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to express the extreme displeasure of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the failure of Security Council resolution 612 (1988) to acknowledge the universally known fact regarding Iraq's responsibility for the use of chemical weapons, the most recent example of which is the genocide in Halabja.

Undoubtedly, you are well aware of the history of the repeated use of chemical weapons by Iraq in the war which it imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran. The instances of the use of this destructive weapon have been documented in the reports of the United Nations chemical experts teams, particularly the report circulated as document S/17911, dated 12 March 1986, as well as the numerous statements of the Security Council, including the statement dated 21 March 1986 strongly condemned the repeated use of this weapon by Iraq. As indicated in Your Excellency's statement (UNIS/SG/156) dated 28 March 1988, on 18 March 1988, the Iraqi régime widely deployed chemical weapons against the dwellers of the city of Halabja, as a result of which thousands of innocent people including children were wounded and martyred. The scale and depth of this crime, committed against Iranian and Iraqi people, as reflected by the variety of weapons used and the number of casualties, were such that the entire international community was shocked. The conscious people of the world were aroused to fight against such acts and international organizations and groups were all compelled to assume a position of hostility against Iraq in this regard. This led to the justified expectation that the United Nations, in view of the enormity of this crime, would take immediate relevant and definitive steps. However, the United Nations allowed the lapse of two weeks following the legitimate request of this Mission to dispatch a team of experts (on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 42/37 C and 37/98 D) before it actually dispatched a limited team under pressure from international public opinion and international outrage and condemnation. The team was dispatched at the time when the evidence, i.e. the effects of the used chemical weapons on the people and the environment, had to a degree worn off due to the passage of time; a great number of the wounded had by then died or been discharged from the hospital after treatment. Such was the United Nations procrastinative reaction to the Halabja genocide, while it reacted with the utmost haste in dispatching a team to Iraq when the latter made

baseless allegations against Iran. This behaviour has raised many questions for us, the answers to which remain unclear.

I suppose that you would agree that the overall expectation was that, notwithstanding the said shortcomings of the United Nations in dispatching a team and preparing and co-ordinating a comprehensive report on the scale of the crime committed by Iraq in Halabja, the report of the team of experts following its observations and its knowledge of the numbers of the casualties of this use of chemical weapons would be discussed in the Security Council, which would in turn respond definitively and condemn this Iraqi crime regardless of political consideration. Unfortunately, under pressure from dominant powers, the Security Council issued resolution 612 (1988) without concern for the outrage expressed by the international community at the dimensions of the crime of genocide perpetrated by Iraq and the latter's confessions on various occasions to its purchase and use of chemical weapons against Iran. In this resolution, while no direct position-taking against Iraq was effected, no preventative or punitive measures were adopted to halt such crimes by Iraq in other areas and indeed to discourage the future use of these weapons by any countries. In our opinion,, the Security Council not only failed to confront the issue of Halabja with enough determination to halt future Iraqi uses of chemical weapons but also left the door open for Iraq to continue its illicit use of chemical weapons.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while emphasizing its long-standing commitment to international rules of humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous and Other Gases, hereby gives a grave and serious warning to the international community, particularly the United Nations, of the dangers of the large-scale and varied use of chemical weapons by Iraq against innocent civilians of Iran and Iraq.

It is also requested that Your Excellency, on the basis of paragraphs 1 and 5 of this resolution, in order to strengthen humanitarian principles and international commitment to international rules of law, particularly the 1925 Geneva Protocol, take immediate necessary measures to prevent the continuation of the use of chemical weapons by such irresponsible countries as Iraq. If and when violations of international rules, particularly the Geneva Protocol of 1925, occur on the part of any country, posing a serious threat against international peace and security, the United Nations should, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/37 C, immediately and without hesitation dispatch a team of experts to the site in question and should also, in view of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and in the interest of the maintenance of international peace and security, effect collective measures and punishment against the violator.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mahmoud Sadat MADARSHAHI
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.