

"When our children were dying you did nothing to help. Now God help your children"

Iraqi Kurdish refugee

The Kurdish district of Garmiyān in the mountains of north-eastern Iraq used to be a pretty place.

There were wheat fields and apricot orchards. The gardens grew melons and pomegranates and grapes. Most houses had a cow tethered outside.

One April morning in 1988, the mountainside echoed to the drone of Iraqi bombers and the flat thud of chemical bombs.

A white cloud drifted among the apricot blossom. Whoever breathed it, died.

Later that day, a group of Kurdish guerrillas came across a procession of people, blistered and burned, stumbling silently from a stricken village.

Azad Abdulla was one of the guerrillas. "Can you imagine," he asks, "what it's like to die this way? If it's cyanide you get dizzy and choke. If it's mustard gas your skin blisters and your lungs begin to bleed and you drown in your own blood."

Abdulla laughed when we showed him a leaflet which tells Americans in Saudi Arabia how to survive a chemical attack.

(It's reproduced here.)

It advises turning off the air-conditioning and standing under a running shower.

But the Kurdish villagers had no such luxuries.

Instead, they had to evolve their own crude methods of coping with poison gas attacks.

They would retreat into a cave after having lit a fire at its mouth. They would climb to the tops of mountains. They would wet turbans and wrap them round their faces.

On that April morning there had been no time to take even these crude measures.

Azad Abdulla and his companions found a small boy and girl clinging to each other. While running away through a wheat field they had come under attack from an Iraqi helicopter and become separated from their parents. The parents had died but the children did not know this.

They kept saying that when it grew

light they would go and look for them. They thought it was night. They did not realise that they were blind.

Almost to the day (on April 12th 1988), Junior Foreign Office Minister David Mellor was forecasting that British industry would soon find "a large market in Iraq."

Was he unaware that Saddam Hussein was systematically gassing Iraq's Kurdish minority? Hardly.

Only three weeks earlier, more than 5,000 men, women and children had died horribly in an Iraqi poison gas attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja. The atrocity received worldwide TV and newspaper coverage.

"Bodies lie in the dirt streets or sprawled in rooms and courtyards of the deserted villas, preserved at the moment of death in a modern version of the disaster that struck Pompeii. A father died in the dust trying to protect his child from the white clouds of cyanide vapour. A mother lies

by side. In a cellar a family crouches together." (Washington Times, March 23rd 1988).

The world was shocked. But not shocked enough to do anything effective. While the USA condemned Iraq's use of chemical weapons, calls for sterner action were resisted.

According to James Adams, Defence Correspondent of the Sunday Times, such western impotence must have acted as an incentive to President Saddam Hussein.

The world's inaction is a subject about which we at Amnesty International find it difficult to remain polite.

For years we have been exposing atrocities committed by the Iraqi government. Nothing effective has ever been done.

On 8th September 1988, five months after Halabja, Amnesty appealed directly to the United Nations Security Council to stop the

TYPES OF GAS

A. MUSTARD GAS

- TOXIC IRRITANT - BLISTERS ON SKIN, INFLAMMATIONS, ETC.
- MAKES YOUR LUNGS BLEED, SLOW DEATH.
- WATER SOLUBLE, WET TOWEL ON HEAD, STAY IN SHOWER.
- LASTS 1 TO 2 HOURS

B. CYANIDE

- HIGHLY HEMOTOXIC.
- NO EXTERNAL INFLAMMATION, ETC. WORKS INSIDE.
- LOSS OF CO-ORDINATION, DIZZINESS, DIFFICULTY BREATHING, PAIN.
- WATER SOLUBLE - SAME AS ABOVE.
- LASTS UP TO ONE HOUR

C. NERVE GAS (VARIOUS TYPES)

- NEUROTOXIC
- QUICK ACTING.
- LOSS OF MOTOR CONTROL, SHAKING, BLURRED VISION, ETC.
- BEST FILTERED VIA ACTIVATED CHARCOAL
- WET CLOTH MASK MAY HELP.
- DISPERSES QUICKLY, LASTS 30 MIN MAX.

GOOD LUCK.

(After expressions of concern from another UN body in August 1990, we are still awaiting effective action.)

Saddam Hussein's annexation of

Kuwait, Margaret Thatcher, did nothing effective. You, George Bush, did nothing effective. You - yes you - reading this advertisement, did nothing effective.

Right now you have a choice. Get offended, or get involved.

This advertisement is an appeal for more members and more money. But we must tell you frankly that there is now little Amnesty can do for the people trapped in Iraq and Kuwait, be they Kuwaitis, Westerners, Asians or the 4 million Iraqi Kurds who are also living in fear.

So why should you join us?

Because we failed with Iraq. Failed to make any impact on Saddam Hussein. Failed to stir the United Nations into doing anything effective. Failed to reach enough ordinary people, like you, who were willing to channel their outrage into constructive action.

God knows how many lives this failure will yet cost.

We have got to make it impossible in future for governments to ignore the genocide of helpless women and children. It must become morally unacceptable for governments to look at photographs of dead children from places like Halabja and then carry on 'business as usual' with their murderers.

That's why you should join us and, if you can afford it, make a donation to our campaign funds. (Small donations gratefully received, business-people please think big.)

"We were screaming till we could not speak," says Azad Abdulla, "and yet no-one listened." It's you he's talking to. If you can hear what he's saying, clip the coupon.



cradling her baby alongside a minibus that lies sideways across the road, hit while trying to flee. Yards away, a mother, father and daughter lie side

by side. Nothing effective was done.

A year after Halabja, we published a report detailing how an eyewitness saw a baby seized as a hostage and deliberately deprived of milk to force its parents to divulge information.

How children as young as 5 years old had been tortured in front of their families.

We revealed that at least thirty different forms of torture were in use in Iraqi prisons, ranging from beatings to burning, electric shocks and mutilation. Torturers had gouged out the eyes of their victims, cut off their noses, ears, breasts and penises, and axed limbs. Objects were inserted into the vaginas of young women, causing the hymen to break. Some of these methods had been used on children.

The report failed to move the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which, days after its publication, voted not to investigate human rights violations in Iraq.

Kuwait seems to have taken many people by surprise. Why?

Why be surprised by the savagery of the Iraqi regime that daily tortures and kills Kuwaiti citizens?

Why be surprised that westerners trapped by the invasion are now helpless hostages?

Why be surprised that it is now young Britons who face the chemical weapons that wiped out thousands of defenceless Kurdish villagers?

Yes, we told you so. In '80, '81, '82, '83, '84, '85, '86, '87, '88 and '89. And you did nothing effective to help.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES: CHEMICAL WARFARE

A. YOU ARE OUTSIDE

YOU WILL DIE. DO NOTHING.

B. YOU ARE INSIDE

- 1) SEAL ALL AIR LEAKS, DRYER VENT, BATHROOM CEILING VENT, PET DOOR.
- 2) TURN OFF A/C. IT WILL ATOMIZE/CIRCULATE ANY GAS WHICH ENTERS.
- 3) LOOK OUT YOUR WINDOWS:

- BIRDS DROPPING FROM TREES
- CATS/DOGS/PEOPLE DROPPING, CHOKING, ETC.
- CARS CRASHING
- GENERAL CHAOS
- VISIBLE FOG/MIST IN AIR

ALL THESE ARE SYMPTOMS, WHEN YOU SEE THEM:

- BARRICADE DOORS/WINDOWS, LET NOBODY IN OR OUT OF THE HOUSE
- YOU CANNOT MAKE IT TO YOUR CAR. DON'T EVEN TRY.

- 4) DRESS TO THE HILT. LONG SLEEVES, PANTS, SOCKS, GLOVES, SCARF. HAT COVER YOUR ENTIRE HEAD WITH A WET TOWEL OR BLANKET.

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£15 Family £5 OAP £5 Student, Under 18, Claimant I wish to donate
£100 £50 £25 £15 Other

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