



# Syria and the Chemical Weapons Convention

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# Early Arms Control Efforts

- **1868 Declaration of St. Petersburg**
- Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight.
  - Saint Petersburg, 29 November / 11 December 1868
- **1899 and 1907 Hague Regulations**
  - The Hague Declarations relating to the discharge of projectiles and explosives from balloons, the use of asphyxiating gases and the use of expanding bullets refer in their preambles to the Declaration of Saint Petersburg
  - signed by delegates but not ratified by participating states. They have no binding force.



# WWI: The Chemists' War

- First attempts failed:
  - First deployed Aug 1914 – tear gas grenades by FR
  - Oct 1914, GER use of sneezing powder
  - Jan 1915 – tear gas on Eastern front at Bolimov
  - March 1915 – GER tear gas at Verdun and Neuport



# Successful Attempts

- Battle of Ypres 22 April 1915
  - GER released 160t (5,730 cylinders) of chlorine
  - Algerian, Moroccan, British, Cdn and FR troops
  - 6,000 died within minutes, many more blinded
- Battle of Loos
  - Sept 21, 1915, 14t chlorine by British

# All-out Chemical Warfare

- phosgene in Poland - May 1915
- White Star gas in Belgium - Dec 1915
- Phosgene at Verdun – Feb 1916
  - 110,000 shells
- Gas use in Middle East – Apr 1917
- First gas attack on US troops – Feb 1918
- US use British and French CW – June 1918
- By end of war, 20 different types used
  - 1,3m casualties, including 90,000 fatalities
  - Total of 190,000t developed by 7 countries
    - Austria-Hungary, FR, GER, ITA, RF, UK, US





# The Geneva Protocol

- Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare
- The Protocol was drawn up and signed at a conference in Geneva under the auspices of the League of Nations from 4 May to 17 June 1925
- entered into force on 8 February 1928
- ‘no first use’

# Continued Use

- Italy in Libya in 1930 and again in Ethiopia in 1935-36 (15,000 casualties)
- Japan in China during WWII (1938 – 1945)
- Declarations of CW retaliation by Churchill in 1942 and Roosevelt in 1942 against Japan and in 1943 against Axis powers
- By end of WWII, 14 countries with CW programmes
- Mixed proliferation after war





# More use and the UN Agenda

- Egypt in Yemen – South Yemen War (1963-1967) – mustard gas and nerve agent
- Vietnam – US sprayed more than 76,500,000 litres of herbicides
- 1966 UNGA Resolution
- 1968 – CBW put on agenda of ENDC
- Dec 1969 UNGA Res 2603 declared ‘as contrary to the generally recognised rules of international law’ the use ‘in international armed conflicts of any chemical agents of warfare – chemical substances, whether gaseous, liquid or solid, which might be employed because of their direct toxic effects on man, animals or plants.’
- 1969 UN Study on CBW effects

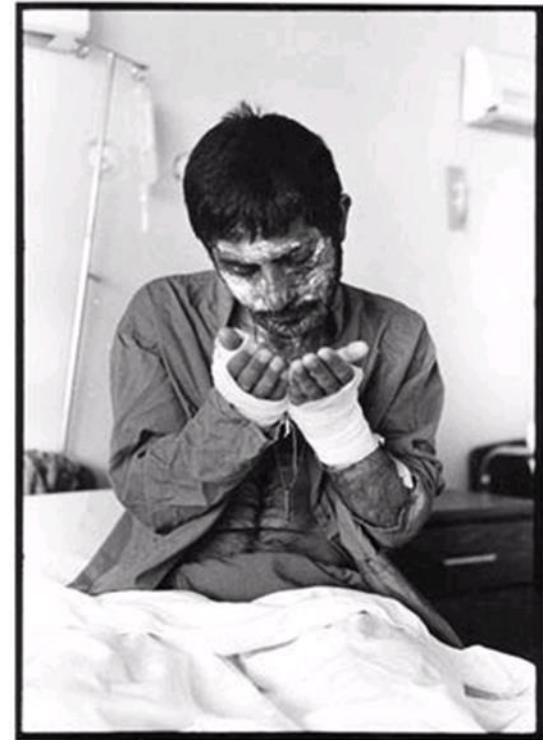




# Iran-Iraq War

- Iran called attention to Iraq's violation of the Geneva Protocol in Nov 1983
- UN-appointed group of experts carried out fact-finding investigations in 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, with four UN missions undertaken in 1988
  - Concluded mustard gas, nerve agent (tabun) had been used. Iraq not named until 1988
- UNSC resolutions in May and August 1988
  - First, condemned CW use and urged observation of the Geneva Protocol
  - Second, included sanctions in case of further (but not past) use

# Mustard Gas effects





# Dual-use transfers

- Results of UN investigations revealed that majority of Iraq's CW production equipment procured from abroad and some CWPF's 'constructed, assembled or completely refurbished with equipment by foreign companies'
  - imported over 1,000t of thiodiglycol from W. Europe and US
  - CW precursors to Iran, Egypt, Libya and Syria (from Western and non-Western)



# The CWC

- 24 years of negotiations
- Opened for signature on 13 January 1993, 130 States signed.
- 29 April 1997 - CWC entered into force
- Prohibits development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, use
- Requires each SP to destroy CW and CWPFs, as well as any CW it may have abandoned on the territory of another SP
- Verification provisions
  - not only affect the military sector but also the civilian chemical industry,
  - verified through a combination of reporting requirements, routine on-site inspections of declared sites and short-notice challenge inspections
- CW attack assistance
- Promotion of peaceful trade in chemicals and related equipment



- Eliminate CW and verify destruction of declared CW stockpiles
- verify the inactivation, destruction or conversion of all declared facilities and stockpiles
- Verify the consistency of industrial chemical declarations and monitor the non-diversion of chemicals for activities prohibited under the CWC
- The OPCW Associate and Internship Support programmes
  - provide specialised training in modern industrial practices and skills development to chemists and engineers from members whose economies are either developing or are in transition
- Worldwide, 4,480 industrial facilities are liable to inspection
- 188 nations, 98% of the global population, have joined the OPCW.
- 53,661, or 75.37%, of the world's declared stockpile of 71,196 metric tonnes of chemical agent have been destroyed.
- 4,779 inspections have taken place at 211 chemical weapon-related and 1,103 industrial sites on the territory of 81 States Parties since April 1997. Worldwide, 4,913 industrial facilities are liable to inspection.

# Another round of use: Syria

- Breaking the world's longest chemical peace of 25 years
- Third case of use in Middle East – only region in world where repetitive CW use
- Egypt and Israel also outside of CWC
- CW first step to WMDFZ in Middle East?





# What Syria has

- 1,000 tonnes stockpile
- initial CW capability provided by Egypt prior to October 1973 war against Israel
- Syria acquired an indigenous capability to develop and produce CW agents, including mustard gas, sarin and possibly VX nerve gas
- allegedly produced since the 1980s at facilities located near the Hama, Homs, and Al-Safira villages in the Aleppo region
- Syria remains dependent on foreign sources for some dual-use equipment, and for precursor chemicals critical to CW agent production.
- Syria possesses Scud-B and Scud-C ballistic missiles, artillery shells, and rockets that are believed to be capable of delivering chemical warheads.