



United Nations

**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ALL VICTIMS OF  
CHEMICAL WARFARE**

**29 April 2015**

**Tehran Peace Museum**

**Tehran, Iran**

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## Remembrance: Introductory Remarks – a time for reflection

- Today we are marking an anniversary tinged with sadness and pain.
- It is a day when we remember the victims and survivors of chemical warfare throughout the world.
- It is a day when we remember them here in Iran, a country which, during a devastating part of its history, bore the brunt of a chemical weapons onslaught.
  
- Exactly 100 years ago this month – during World War One – is when the first gas attack took place at Ypres in Belgium.
- And although much has been done by organizations such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations, chemical weapons are still being used today.
- Stockpiles of these weapons of mass destruction still exist.
- Now – today – in a country not far from here – we again hear disturbing reports that chlorine gas continues to be used against civilians.
- This needs to end.
- We need to increase our efforts to eliminate chemical weapons from the world.

## How Do We Do This?

- Policymakers, governments and members of organizations such as the OPCW are working hard to achieve the goal of a world free of chemical weapons.
- But we – you and I here today – can **all** play our part in educating ourselves and raising awareness.
  
- And it is here that I would like to turn specifically to the **survivors** – in Iran – of chemical weapons used during the Imposed War.
- I would like to recognize their role in helping to remind us – every day – of the consequences of chemical weapons.
- Many of these brave women and men are sitting here among us today.
- We not only have soldiers who were scarred by chemical weapons.
- We also have women and ordinary civilians who were also exposed to the attacks.
- We need to listen to them.
- And in so doing, “feel” differently – and think differently – when the drums of war begin to roll.

## A Living Museum

- Today we sit in a special part of Park-e Shahr. A special part of Tehran. A special part of the world.

- And, as you spend a little time here in the Tehran Peace Museum, I urge you to look around.
- Consider the powerful rich displays.
- Be moved by the frightful history on its walls.
- The photographs and charts tell you everything you need to know about the chemistry behind the weapons.
- But that is only part of what you will find.
- The real treasure lies in the testimonies of the survivors who still have wisdom – and learning – and experience – to impart.
- Spend time talking with them. Men like these whom I know personally...
  - Hassan Hassanisadi
  - AliReza Yazdan Panah
  - Hassan Hassani Tabar
- But there are at least 20 survivors present today. I would like to ask them to stand while we express our solidarity with them and their story.
- After the ceremony, please introduce yourself, and make a new friend.

### **Unique Opportunities to Hear History for Yourself**

- Let these brave and bold survivors be your guides to this special place.
- Listen to them – as I once did.
- You will hear for yourself what is different when a chemical bomb explodes.
- You will hear how the victims felt – their fear, their pain, their terror.
- You will hear about their healing.
- And how – for them – the gas attack never ended.
- You will hear about how they cope with life now – over 30 years later –with wounds still unhealed.

### **Moving beyond history to build a Culture of Peace**

- But our purpose should not just be to learn about history.
- We need to learn about peace.
- And how we can work together.
- How we are all responsible – each and every one of us – to build a culture of peace.
- In our homes. In our communities. In our nations.
- Among our nations.
- For these same survivors who teach us history through their own eyes, will challenge us to use our new knowledge to consider alternatives to conflict and war.
- You will probably be surprised – as I once was – to learn that these survivors hold no hate in their hearts.
- No desire for vengeance.
- Nor retribution.

- They have seen what hate produces. They live with its consequences every day.
- Their message is that such weapons – such hate – have no place in civilized living.
- Through their actions and words the survivors say this.
- Look at me.
- This is what happens when you unleash the demons inside of you.
- When you unleash chemical weapons.
- This is wrong.
- There is no place in this world for such barbarity.

### **Concluding Remarks**

- Please allow me to recognize, in concluding, the contribution of two brothers who are no longer with us.
- Mr. Ahmad Zangiabadi – and Mr. Jahanshah Sadeghi.
- Let us follow their example – and that of the colleagues who are still with us.
  - And find peace in our hearts.
  - And share it with others.
- I reflect on the inspiring words of the late Mr. Sadeghi:
  - **“I believe it is our responsibility to make friends with each other, to smile to each other.**
  - **Then, I believe that the tension between countries and nations will just disappear.”**
- And I recall something I once heard:
- **“An enemy is someone whose story you have not yet heard.”**
- Thank you!