

Chemical Agents Made in Germany

Victims of Chemical Attacks demonstrate in Syria and Iraq German Government conceals co-responsibility for Chemical Weapons Programs

Berlin/Halabja, 16 March 2015

Today, people from Halabjah and East Ghuta are demonstrating to remember the victims of the chemical attacks of 1988 and 2013. In both places, survivors of chemical attacks also address the German government and ask for a full disclosure of documents on the involvement of German companies in the Syrian chemical weapons program. In Iraq and Syria, German companies supplied material and know-how to the development of chemical agents. People blame the German government for its unwillingness to unfold details of the involvement and persecute traders for their role in Iraq's and Syria's WMD-program.



Demonstration in Halabja, 16 March 2015: After Halabja you said: Never again! After Ghouta you said: Never again! What will you say next time?

Germany's Co-Responsibility

The production of chemical warfare in Iraq and Syria was highly dependent on foreign aid and supplies. In the case of Iraq, a large proportion of this »aid« came from German companies that supplied chemical agents, production units, material and know-how. Evidence indicates that German companies were involved in Syria's chemical weapons program as well, but documents on the subjects are being classified as strictly confidential by Germany's government.

The people from East Ghuta and Halabja ask for an end of impunity. Any serious, concrete initiative against the use of chemical weapons must start from the point of supply and support of WMD-production. Companies and governments who take part in the proliferation of chemical weapons must be held responsible for it. This includes the supply of so called dual use goods to countries where the existence of WMD-program is already known.

Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, honoured the victims of the 1988 chemical attack on Halabja with a resolution in 2013. Today, Germany's politicians must take the consequences and demand from their government a full disclosure of evidence on German involvement in Syria's WMD-program. A government that promotes human rights standards in its foreign policy cannot withhold documents that may indicate a German co-responsibility for crimes against humanity in Syria.

Support for the survivors

Those who survived the 2013 attacks on the Eastern Ghuta need our support. Still, Ghuta is besieged by governmental troops. People starve, and there is virtually no medical aid since the hospital has been bombed out by Syrian troops. East Ghuta is being shelled by artillery and bombed with so called barrel bombs on a daily basis. People who survived the chemical attacks in 2013 are cut from any support. Germany and Europe must work for an end of the siege, a free access of humanitarian organisations to the population and an immediate withdrawal of troops.



Demonstration in Halabja, 16. März 2015

WADI works for more than two decades in Northern Iraq and the Middle East and supports programs for the survivors of chemical attacks.

For more information see <http://www.wadi-online.de>.

Background

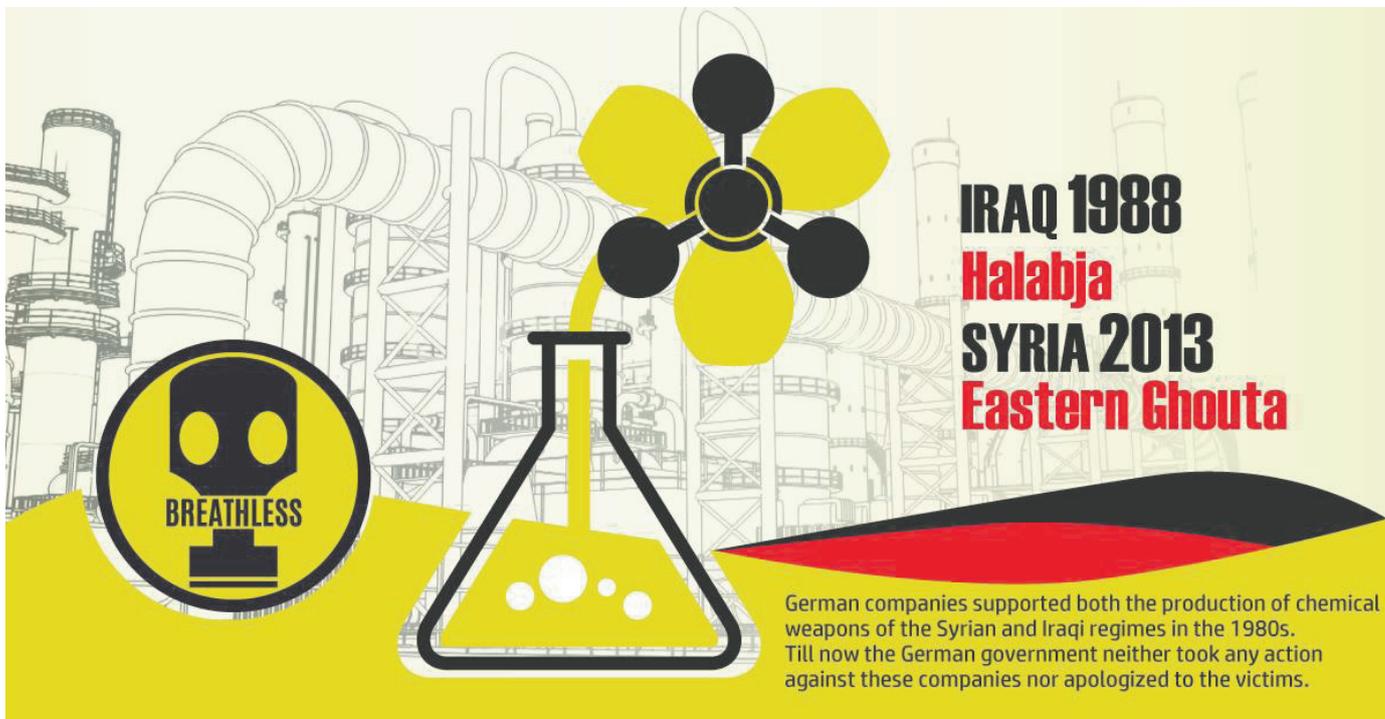
Halabja 1988: More than 5,000 people died when the Iraqi army bombed the town of Halabja with chemical agents on March 16 1988, around 10,000 people died from injuries and related diseases. Halabja was the culminating point of Iraqs genozidal campaign against the Kurdish population. For more than 60 cases the use of chemical agents against the population is documented. German companies supplied the Iraqi government with chemical agents, goods, productions facilities and know-how for the production of chemical weapons.

Ghouta 2013: 25 years after the attack on Halabja, Syrias government used chemical agents against civilians in the Ghuta area close to Damascus. In August 2013, Rockets and grenades with chemical agents exploded in Hammuriyah, Hirista, Irbin, Sepqa, Kafr Batna, Ayn Tarma, Jobar and Zamalka and killed between 1,300 und 1,400 people. Five days after the attack, a UN inspection team arrived at place and gathered evidence in some points of impact. In the meantime, Syrian troops shelled the area exsessively with artillery to erase tracks. The inspection team could nonetheless detect the toxic agent Sarin.

Sarin: Sarin is a wide spread toxic agent. It is resorbed by skin surface all over the body and leads to breathlessness, spasms, uncontrollable convulsions, salivation, vomiting and finally respiratory paralysis. These symptoms are accompanied by extreme fear and panic. Sarin brings about a cruel and extremely trotuous death.

Chemical Agents: Weapons of Mass Terrorization

Chemical Agents are classified as Weapons of Mass Destruction - but the easy to use and local effect of chemical weapons makes them a perfect instrument to terrorize people. From Saddam Hussein to Bashir al Assad, chemical agents were used as weapons against the civil population. Toxic agents are easy to use: they can be dropped as bombs, shot in rockets, shelled with grenades. They don't need high-tech or a functioning administration, their impact is local and temporarily. The impacts on the people affected are nonetheless immense. And: Using chemical agents is secure for governments. Neither Saddam Hussein nor Bashir als Assad have been formally accused for gasing their own people.



Poster from Ghouta

WADI works for more then two decades in Northern Iraq and the Middle East and supports programs for the survivors of chemical attacks.

For more information see <http://www.wadi-online.de>.