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ئیمه ده زانین که پاش روخانی رژیمی هیتلەر، جووله که کان توانیان تاوانه کانی قهرکردنیا به دهستی ئه و رژیمه، که هۆلۆکوۆست ناسراوه، بکه ن به کیشیه کی تاییه تی ناسنامه ی خوین، به مهش توانیان پرسى ناسنامه که یان بکه ن به پرسى کی جیهانی. ئاکامی ئه و خه باته شیان بوو به پیکهینانی دهوله تی ئیسرائیل. له و روانگه گرینگه وه بو ئه وه ی یادی هه له بجه و کوۆسته کانی ئه نفال له یاده وه ریماندا ببیته سه رچاوه یه کی هه لۆوو لاوی هه میشه بو کیشیه ی پرسى ناسنامه و دیرۆکی کوردی، ئه رکی ئیمه وه ک "ناوه ندی هه له بجه" له پال ریسوا کردنی تاوانه کانی رژیمی رماوی عیراق، هه ولدانه بو به به لگه کردن و ناساندنی ئه و تاوانه جهرگبرانه یه به کوۆ جیهان. هه ر بۆیه نووسین و ئاوپردانه وه ی غه یره کورد له سه ر کوۆستی هه له بجه و ئه نفال به هایه کی گرینگى هه یه بو ناساندن و به میژوو کردنی کیشیه ی کورد، که له به ر جیاوازیه کولتوری و میژووییه نه ته وایه تیه که ی، له لایه نی رژیمه درپدانه که ی عیراق، هه ولی قهرکردنی دراوه. لیڤه وه وتاری "سیس بوونی گۆل له ژیر زه مه نی بارانیکی ژه هراویکراودا"، که ئیلیۆنۆرا برو، نووسیویه تی، یه کیکه له و به لگانه ی که بو پیناسه ی کوۆستی هه له بجه بایه خی خوی هه یه. نووسه ری سویدی ئیلیۆنۆرا برو، ئه و نووسینه ی له زانکوۆ "سوڤه رتۆرن" له ستۆکهۆلم بو به شی "گه شه ی جیهانگیری" پشکesh کردوه. شیوه ی ئه کادیمی ئه م نووسینه کاریگه ریه کی باشی له سه ر مامۆستاو خویندکاره کان به جیهیشتوه، که ئه وان به ر له م نووسینه به یئاگا بوونه له کاره ساتی هه له بجه و ئه نفال. نووسه ر له ئه نجامگیری نووسینه که یدا به شیک له تاوانی هه له بجه و ئه نفال کردنی کورد به چه کی کیمیایی ده خاته سه ر شانی ئاکامه کانی ئه و گه شه سه ندنه جیهانگیریه، که به رژه وه ندی سیاسى و ئابووه یه کانی ولاته زله یزه کانی وه ک ئه مریکا و به ریتانیا و ئه لمانیا و... ئه و کارگانه ی که چه ک و که ره سه ی کیمیایی به ره مه مدین، هۆکاریکن له پشته وه ی ئه م جوړه تاوانه. له م روانگه یه وه ئه م نووسینه، ده کرئ ده روازیه ک بی بو یادی ئازاره گه وه ره کانی هه له بجه، هه روا له یادی ئه مسالدا ببیته هانده ریگ بو جه ختکردنه وه ی ئه و به لگانه و ریسوا کردنی تاوانباران.

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## **The time of the poisoned rain**

**The environmental transformation after the Iraqi chemical weapon attacks  
At the Kurdish people and their nature**

### **Imprisoned by the executioners of the truth**

Dana Sofi is a man who comes from the Iraqi part of Kurdistan. At the moment he is studying at the Stockholm University, and has been living in Sweden in four years time. In 1997 he was forced to leave Kurdistan since the war was going on in the country.

North of Hawler there is a big valley called Balisan which keeps about twenty villages together. Approximately six hundred people lived in every single village, and they were living with the horror of the war in the air that they were breathing, every day. As they were both geographically and socially squeezed between the enemies of war, Iran and Iraq. They continued their everyday life taking care of their soil so that it got filled with fruit trees. Fruit trees were growing well in this type of climate. They were feeding their animals like cheeps, goats and chicken, and the donkeys were a good carrying force to use on the way to the markets.

Two hours away from there is the city of Hawler and it was from here Dana had to experience to what kind of life limiting judgements the Iraqi rulers had judged the Kurdish people and their nature. Iran and Iraq was in the last part of the war which had been going

on since 1980 and during this time both of them had pointed some of their weapon power against the Kurds. The weapon was not only shaped as guns. They had other powerful ideological weapons in the shape of an Islam and Arab model.

The will to make the Kurds Arabic had reached Hawler a long time ago with the Iraqi forces, and this had caused great consequences for the Kurdish inhabitants of the city.

Dana had been growing up in a family who full-hearted supported the Kurdish opposition movement that fought for the legitimating of the Kurdish identity, with autonomy as a main goal. He got imprisoned as a fourteen year old in the timeless and abstract environment of a prison, by the Iraqi secret service. The prison in which he was looked in had earlier been a stable for animals. Therefore it was very dirty and the vermin caused itches and diseases for the prisoners in there.

The year was 1987 and the Iraqi air bombings with chemical warfare against valleys where Kurdish civilians were living, was ongoing.

In Balisan it was a village called Shejkwasan that got most damaged by the chemical air bombings, during this period. Of six hundred civilian people in that village there would be one hundred and fifty people still alive as the mustard gas had stopped raining from heaven that day.

The people died from inhaling the mustard gas and their skin was corroded by gigantic pus blisters, mostly around the eyes and on the feet's. The animals died and the fruits on the trees fell deadly to the ground.

This whole tragic scenario went very fast and in all the chaos that started after what had occurred, the Iraqi army was spreading out to mislead the damaged Kurds and make them believe that it was the Iranian air force that stood behind the attack.

So the surviving Kurds fled towards different arias of Iraq, where the Iraqi army was standing waiting for them to put them in the arrest. Some of these Kurds were put in the same prison as the one Dana was found in.

This day seventy civilians came to the prison in Hawler and Dana, like all of the other prisoners, had to take care of the damaged and bury the wounded civilians that died during their time in the prison. It was twenty prisoners who had to bury at least fifty civilians during the following days, and three days after they had arrived to the prison all the civilian men was removed from there.

Later on Dana found out that the Iraqi army had been commissioned to bury these men alive.

The real intention of the Iraqi army had been to murder all the survivors of the gas bombings, to prevent the information about their use of the chemical weapon, from

spreading over the world. But the Kurdish guerrilla quickly found out what had happened and turned to Iran to, by their help, tell this to the world. Dana therefore knows why the civilian women and children in the prison had the chance to survive. These civilians were released from the prison after one week, since they usually had been repeatedly sexually abused of the Iraqi army. And the Kurdish women who seemed "undamaged" and who hadn't got seriously wounded on their bodies, got sold of the Iraqi army to different Arab nations, mostly to Saudi-Arabia.

Due to the Arabic myth the Kurdish woman, because of her beautiful outside, had an Indo-European origin and therefore was looked upon as more excellent than their own Arabic women. As they sold these Kurdish women to the Arabs they robbed the Kurdish culture on its honour, because the women are a symbol of honour in Kurdistan.

Nearly two years after the bombings of the village Shejkwasan, and in the end of 1988, Dana returned there and was met up with a look of death. Nobody lived there at the time but it was still some green fruit trees standing in bloom. The bother though was that the flowers never more could turn into fruits.

Thousands of Kurdish villages had become emptied of life, like Shejkwasan, due to the chemical bombings from 1986 to 1991 when Iraq capitulated in the war against Iran. But many Kurds who had fled during the war years decided at this time to return to their villages, as it usually was the only option of a home that they had. They tried hard to restart the work with the soil and their animals but the struggle was many times in vain. Not much could grow in the soil nowadays so the animals died, and the vegetables that could still grow were poisoned by the chemical gas as the soil was still poisoned. And when it came to the fruit trees, like we have noticed before, they could still bloom but no fruits could grow on them.

Of the people whose villages had been bombed with gas many had got mentally diseases and the number of deformed children who got born, and still today get born, in this areas is much bigger than ever before. There is also a given fact that visibly healthy women who lived in these villages during the bombings still today can't get children, and have got sterile. Many people from these villages are also, still at this moment, living with seriously defects on, and inside, their bodies caused by the chemicals they inhaled in some hours many years ago.

Because of the non-existing chance to get medical treatment and medicine quickly after the bombings many people have got blind as a cause of the bad wounds around their eyes.

People can't walk because of that the boils on the inner thighs and the feet have never got the chance to get treated correctly. **Not the United Nations, neither the NGOs was there to help the Kurds at the time when they could had made a great difference in the future of many peoples life and health, simply by helping the civilians with doctors and medicines.**

Dana remember how they, as prisoners, tried to bribe the prison guards with money to make them go and buy some medicine for them, as the civilians of the gas bombings had arrived to the prison. They told the guards that the medicine would only be used by the prisoners. If the guards had found out that the medicine secretly got used by the damaged children and women, than Dana and the other prisoners would probably had been executed.

This was the climate during these war years, and at the same time as Iran was spreading the news around the world that their war enemy Iraq used chemical weapons in their warfare the United Nation, together with the Western World, concealed this news. Small notes about the terrible sufferings of the Kurds for the last ten years were finding its ways to the Western media, but the Western World still was genuinely uninterested in helping the Kurds with anything.

The West uphold that it would be absolutely risky to get up in the Kurdish mountains and start a rescue work, and support the millions of refugees who were circulating in these areas.

It have emerged that for example the United States was a big damage for the Kurds as they exported enormous amounts of wheat to Iraq during the war years. The Kurds had been the exporters of wheat to Iraq before the war but during the later part of 1980 Iraq decided to start some massive punishment sanctions against the Kurds and therefore stopped buying the wheat from them. They did this because the Peshmerga (the guerrilla of the Kurdish liberation movement) survived on the food and help from the Kurdish farmers during the battles on the mountains. By starving the Kurdish farmers in the mountains, through food sanctions, Iraq believed that they also could starve the guerrilla.

Why Iraq decided so powerfully to use chemical warfare against the Kurdish villages during the later half of the war depended upon that the Iraqi army couldn't beat the opposition by the Kurdish Peshmerga in any other way.

The Peshmerga had only access to a tiny piece of the human and weapon resource that the Iraqi army possessed, but instead they had the talent to survive in the mountain life.

They had been growing up in mountain environments and could master the nature for their benefit; therefore they were almost impossible for the Iraqi army to conquer. So the

chemical weapons were a desperate solution for this great power as it was the only way that they could be able to beat down the Kurdish opposition totally, by using the tactic of the genocide.

Today the Kurdish society has been forced to undergo great changes caused by the war. With Saddam Hussein as the boss the Iraqis moved the Kurds by coercion from their villages by bombing thousands of them (called "the demographic revolution"), therefore the nature and the geographical environmental changes have led to a point where the feudalistic culture is starting falling into pieces.

At the big moving of coercion the Kurds was collected in huge groups on so called "good areas" for the Iraqis. Saddam Hussein quickly named these areas to a kind of modernising project.

Towns have now grown up out of this collection areas because most Kurds living there have no home to return to, at least they have no means to start a rebuilding of their past village life.

The towns are in the foundation really only collection establishments say Dana, who in the last years has witnessed the consequences of these towns and of the Kurdish situation in whole. And the people are living in poverty without functional energy- and water systems. As the water is dirty diseases are easily spread and the tiny group of doctors are usually all too expensive to work as help for the people.

Prostitution have also become an element in the everyday life in this slum towns as both the lack of money as well as the obliterating of the Kurdish culture are supported by the geographical neighbours Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey, all the ones that have thieved the land from the Kurds.

Shared between them they got a bigger country and also the word Kurdistan erased from the history and geography books. In school the Kurdish children learned Arabic as Saddam Hussein meant that Kurdistan belongs to the big Arab country. And the genuine problem for the Kurds is that the surrounding Arab countries are accepting this thought.

But doesn't it seem even more strange, Dana says, how the western democratically governments are choosing to conceal the concealing itself which have been ongoing, and still are, in the case Kurdistan?

## **The United Nations view on chemical weapons**

The United Nations convention against chemical weapons was signed the 13th of January 1993, and the convention, which is kept on an international base, means a total prohibition of chemical weapons, whether it means possessing, buying, selling or using them.

Rules on how to destroy these kinds of weapons and rules about aid to states which have been exposed by these weapons are also to find there.

The opinion by the United Nations is that countries, which are too poor to make nuclear weapons, often buy chemical weapons and this creates a negative arming tendency, which in its turn constitutes a threat against the peace and safety.

By finding out that Iraq, the United States and Russia had chemical weapons the United Nations made the three countries agree upon a beginning of the destroying of their weapons, in unity with the regulations of the United Nation. These regulations means that the weapons shall be broke down in specific buildings with strive to minimize the possibilities for discharge in the nature, and other threats against the environment. But there is well known that several countries have been breaking the United Nations regulation by dumping a great part of the chemical waste in the lakes.

The strivings for disarming of this weapon category have been ongoing since 1899 when an agreement was signed in Haag, saying that projectiles that had as a purpose to poison had to be abandoned.

But already during the First World War approximately one hundred thousands of soldiers died by the cause of chemical weapons, and over one million people got injured because of the use of them. In 1925 The Geneva Convention was established with its ban against chemical and biological weapons, as a consequence of the tragic outcome of the First World War.

During the Second World War chemical weapons was, almost only, used by the Japanese army in their war against China. Why other armies didn't use them again in this war

depended upon that they had lost its effectiveness as the soldiers had learned to protect themselves against chemical weapons already in the First World War.

When the Second World War had come to an end both chemical and biological weapons was appointed as weapons of mass destruction, by the United Nations in 1948.

The United Nations hope for today is that every country in the world will sign the regulations of United Nations that was ready to sign in 1993, to avoid defensive tendencies of arming of chemical weapons, in the world.

But several countries in the Middle East have still not signed and accepted these regulations, probably because of the natural cause that the situation in there areas is, and have been, insecure during a very long time.

The United Nations are not denying that there is a serious risk that future terrorist groups will use the chemical weapons to reach their goals. Own troops from the United Nations have been spread around the world to control that all the chemical weapons, including the instruments for using them, have been destroyed. This have been a step to tell the world that the United Nations don't tolerate chemical weapons under any kind of circumstances, and it can also be shown in their agreeing with sanctions against countries that have a big risk of keeping chemical weapons, like Iraq in 1991.

The United Nations are causing consequences for a country when information about chemical weapon use has reached them, like the fact that: "It's in the front the most Kurds are dying. Many get killed because of the Iraqi air force attacks with chemical weapons. These are not only affecting Iranian towns, even the Kurdish villages and towns in Iran and Iraq. At the attacks the nerve poison tabun is used, the skin poison yperit and napalm (The United Nations C-weapon report).<sup>1</sup>

**Doesn't it seem very strange then how the United Nations ignored their already existing conventions during the whole period between 1986-1989, at the time when the civilian population in Kurdistan repeatedly was attacked with chemical weapons, in front of the whole worlds eyes, and surely in front of the knowledge and eyes of the United Nations?**

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<sup>1</sup> The kurdish knot - Genocide in the shadows of the Gulf War, Hannes Reichmann & Alexander Foggensteiner, Tryckeriförlaget, Södertälje 1989, sid: 24.



### **A short history of chemical weapons and their consequences in Kurdistan**

Chemical weapons, or usually called C-weapons as "C" stands for the concept chemical, reached its actual development in relation to the development of the modern chemical industries during the end of the nineteenth century. Like I have said before, it was during the First World War these weapons were commonly used with the consequence of hundred thousands of dead soldiers and over one million people badly injured.

After the world war the armies learned to protect themselves with gasmasks if the enemy would use chemical weapons and it lead to the point where the usage of this kind of weapons didn't get profitable, from a war point of view.

In the Geneva-record 1925, which was an answer to the strong opinion against chemical weapons after the ending of the First World War, the usage of chemical weapons was forbidden but not the development and possession of it. It caused a arming of fear, mostly in Germany, the Soviet Union, the United States and Japan, with the defensive thought that these weapons would only be used if someone else was attacking these countries with chemical weapons.

During the Second World War it was almost only Japan that used chemical weapons, the mustard gas, against China. After the end of this war there was quite usual that Germany and the Soviet Union was dumping a great part of chemical weapons in the southern areas of the East Sea. Other kinds of garbage pale dumping in the water were taking place near Gotland and Måseskär, outside Sweden. The British C-weapon arsenal was dumped in the North Sea during the time of the Second World War. Therefore the sea safety personnel always have medicine with them if any fisherman would be poisoned by the chemical weapons that lay in their fishing water.

In the United States the 1950ies was used to research about how to create a kind of nerve gas which could start work just before the weapon was put into use, to minimize the risk for injuries on their own soldiers. But the project seriously failed and was stopped.

During the 1960ies the Western World was starting to realise that the easy made and quite cheap chemical weapons showed tendencies on spreading as effective weapons in the economically poorer parts of the world. At the Yemen War, in the middle of 1960, mustard gas was used and the Laotic government used chemical weapons against an extremely forgotten mountain people in Laos, named the H'Mong people.

**This information have never been scientifically confirmed as the United Nations came to the countries to long time afterwards to investigate about the rumours.**

Once again we can see that the United Nations used their ignorance, instead of their own words about laws against usage of chemical weapons, in their (non-) actions to find out what had happened, and to put a stop to it.

At the autumn of 1983 news about Iraq using chemical weapons in war, came from Iran. And just a few months later Iran sent about thirty gas wounded soldiers to European and Japanese hospitals. The publicity of the news in the mass Medias was tremendous and the United Nations sent an investigation group to establish that chemical weapons were used in the war against Iran, which they did.

Well, one thing was politically hard though because the head sponsor of the material to create chemical weapons in Iraq was the United States then own ministry of defence. It seemed obvious for the United States to sponsor Iraq in the war against Iran as Iran at that time was the biggest threat, in the Middle East, against the United States, starting with the Iranian revolution in 1979. The big issues in the revolution were the hatred pointed at the United States, regarding mainly political, economical and ethnical values. By helping Iraq the United States tried to slow down the growing Islamic hatred in the whole Middle East region, against the Western World.

The United Nations understood that Iraq was using the chemical weapons but choose to not do anything to put a stop to it. Their passivity at the time is not hard to understand regarding to who was the superpower sponsors to Iraq, at the specific time. **Who have ever had the idea that the United Nations wouldn't be political and ideological to?**

During the whole 80ies Iraq could repeatedly use their chemical weapons against Iran and Kurdistan, in the areas around Iran, Iraq and Turkey. It's always a big thing to be friend with the superpower, isn't it?

Several western journalists illegally came through the Baghdad Airport and inside Iraq to document the rumours of the chemical bombings against the Kurds. Many of them were found by the Iraqi army and got executed, but the ones who succeeded getting material and smuggle it all the way back to the West had very hard time getting it published in the Western Media.

The mass Medias kept silent about what was actually going on with the Kurdish civilians in the villages and towns. And could it possibly be a connection between the mass Medias quiet and the political interests in the West, at the time?

When the war between Iran and Iraq had ended in august 1988 Iraq continued their chemical bombings, and their ordinary war which had been going on through the whole 80ies, against the Kurds with an extreme force. **Mostly the Kurds between the borders of Iraq and Turkey got attacked, but the United Nations could never establish these so called rumours as they were refused to go into Kurdistan by both Turkey and Iraq. The United Nations quietly accepted that.**

By then the United Nations had knowledge about what had happened in the Kurdish town Halabja (which the Swedish television even today are refusing to call anything else than "a little village in Iran"!) in the Iraqi part, and which at that time was solely inhabited by the Kurdish civilians who hadn't got a chance to flee away from many years of war in this areas.

It was in the midday in March 1988 the Iraqi air force well forth over the town and let nerve gas and mustard gas rain down over the people and their land. Five thousand people immediately died of the gassings, and the photography's of horror are witnessing how a little boy are dying in his fathers arms, of how the little baby dies in the middle of its eating in her mothers arms.

All over the town a heavy silence quickly laid down and the moaning of the survivor's corroded skin and cramps was the only sounds that hadn't been quieted.

The cheeps and the hens laid dead and the leafs, flowers and trees lost their colours less then one hour after the first bomb had reached the ground.

Halabja was not an isolated case from Iraq as it's easy to getting fooled to believe as you start research in the material about the chemical bombings over Kurdistan. But it was the concentrated proof of the outrageous brutality which Iraq used against the Kurdish civilians for at least a decade.

In the town of Halabja, a morning in March, mostly children, women and older people was living and which many already had lost their parents and child's in the Kurdish opposition

movement Peshmerga, who had to fight against the both enemies Iran and Iraq for their survival. When the evening came and the sun drowned in darkness that night it took the life of one more Kurdish town with it.

During 1991 the West decided to do something about Iraq's use of chemical weapons, certainly Iraq had already at this time succeeded their mission to beat down the rebellion of the Kurdish people. But now it concerned protecting American soldiers and the West's economical interests in the shape of oil, in Kuwait. Iraq had invaded Kuwait and all of a sudden the West "woke up" from its coma by realising who they had supported inside the costume of Saddam Hussein.

The American soldiers were equipped with gasmasks in protection for possible bombings of chemical weapon from Iraq, and the United Nations quickly acted by sending an alliance with its goal to liberate Kuwait, in the beginning of the same year.

As we know the war between Iraq and Kuwait had a quick end and Iraq was forced to capitulate with the rest of the world's massive condemnation of Saddam Hussein and the state of Iraq.

The United Nations Security Council decided to immediately go to Iraq to witness the destroying of the chemical weapons and could therefore soon find the gigantic factories used for creating them. What the mass Medias "forgot" to write about this time was the small invisible notes that individuals with a sharper look for the truth couldn't close their eyes for, which encapsulate the atmospheres of the factories and on which it in the reflection was to read: "Made in West".

## **Chemical weapons used against the Kurds, and its side-effects**

"With poisonous chemical concerns every chemical which through its chemical effect on the life process can cause death, temporary incapacity or permanent damage on humans and animals".<sup>2</sup>

This meaning of the word have been created during the disarmament conference in Geneva and it is with this pattern as a ground it is judged whether criminal acts have been committed outside this regulation. The chemicals which were used by Iraq against the Kurdish population were nerve gas and mustard gas.

The nerve gases are affecting the transmission of the impulse in the nervous system as they are taken up through the skin and by the inhalation, therefore its called nerve gas. These gases are extremely poisonous and are causing high mortality; the breakdown of the body also goes very quick when the body has been in contact with the nerve gases. The symptom on the people who was attacked by Iraq's nerve gas bombings was first coughing and difficulties in breathing, and strong cramps that made the person unconscious. This meant that the nerve gas made the people choke to death, as they didn't have any kind of medicines as protection against these gases.

The Kurdish Democratical Party (KDP) had, during the whole war, tried to improve the medical service and they proved during the war that: ".../ the party is offering a surgeon in the party 100000 American dollars as a year salary. But the organisation hadn't been able to employ even one surgeon. The Kurdish living conditions are bad with hard privations."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> FOA informs about CHEMICAL WEAPONS- threat, usage and protection, Försvarets Forskningsanstalt , Naturinformation AB, Örebro 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: sid, 76.

The mustard gas was also used a lot by Iraq against the Kurdish population and its effects could be seen clearer as the mustard gas was attacking the skin in the way that the people got badly burned with wounds and blisters. The skin around the eyes became big wounds and many people lost their sight. This gas is attacking the body tissue and goes through the skin and it also caused serious harm in the respiratory organs. As the people got bombed by the mustard gas the symptoms on the body of the gas could be seen later than the much quicker shown symptoms at the attacks with nerve gas.

The symptoms of the mustard gas could develop inside the body for some days before the injured person would be able to feel them. Even this gas cause's high mortality and most of the people who got attacked by this gas in a five kilometres distance (or less) died within one week.

While the Kurdish population had as much as no working hospital care it got the brutal consequences that many people who could have survived with medical treatment couldn't manage to survive. The bodily effects of the mustard gas can last in at least 30-40 years time, which have the consequences that many people who got injured by the gas and survived are today living with chronically inhalation problems and remaining eye damages.

Independent research have shown that many women who today are living in environments which got poisoned by the gas many years ago still today cant get children, but the researchers haven't come to a conclusion about what is the cause of this sterility. It wouldn't be totally wrong to think that there is a connection between eating the vegetables from a poisoned soil and drinking water from the springs which probably have been mixed with the gas.

It's a fact that many of the people who got attacked by the gases have got mentally ill, as well as the fact that much more babies, than before the bombings, nowadays are born deformed in these areas. These facts are the Kurdish people living with still today and their lives are living proofs of the long going damaging consequences on the people and their nature, caused by the use of chemical weapons in wars. Consequences so long going that even the next generation children will get injured by the fact that their mother or father was near a place that got bombed over ten years ago.

Cancer is a disease which has been increased like an avalanche amongst the Kurds after the war years, but because of the minimal research made in these areas there hasn't been a chance to scientifically establish exactly what long going causes that the chemical bombings had on the Kurdish population. But it's obvious for the affected people, who live

with the symptoms every day, that they can see clear tracks between the chemical bombings and their own injuries and deceases.

### **The protectors of the motherly mountain**

Handren comes from the Iraqi part of Kurdistan, and was growing up in the city of Hawler. He lived some of his earliest years in the Iranian part and joined the Kurdish guerrilla in 1980 till 1989. During these years as a Peshmerga he worked on their own free radio station and newspaper up in the mountains, but most of the time he was taking part in the battles. In 1991 Handren came to Sweden and right now he is ending his studies at the university. The year was 1987 and Handren remember so clearly, like it had happened yesterday, how he at one of all the war battles through the years was stationed in one of the Balisan valleys called Binau. During this time an insistent war was continuing between Iraq and the Peshmerga, and the valley Binau was the village which border on the Iraqi regimes controlled area. At the time the valley Binau was controlled by the Peshmerga. The Iraqi army had control over the highest mountain in the village and from that point they kept bombing down on the Peshmerga and the civilians in the valley. Handren and the other Peshmerga directly realised when Iraq was using chemical weapons in their cannons because the Iranian soldiers had told them how it looked like. The Iranians had been attacked with chemical weapons in their war against Iraq long time ago, like I have said before.

These specific bombs did, instead of splintering up when they exploded, create a smoke that went upward instead of just falling down. The sound of that explosion was not as loud as the sound of ordinary bombs that exploded.

He remembers the white-grey colour of the smoke and when the Peshmerga saw it they immediately searched for safety on the mountain peaks in the area. Therefore such chemical bombings hardly affected the Peshmerga as they just had to climb higher than the gas to be saved from it. The gas was moving slowly forward and the Peshmerga, who was

very used to climbing, easily could get away from it. As Handren remember no one of the Peshmergas around him got sick because of these attacks by the gas.

But he also remember how Iraq started bombing intensively with chemical weapons during the whole year 1988, and when the war between Iraq and Iran ended in august 1988 Iraq pointed all their forces against the Kurdish resistance movement. It was at this time the intensive air bombings and the Iraqi ground forces were put in on order of Saddam Hussein. The Kurdish people in the mountains were fleeing in panic towards Iran and other calmer areas and the Peshmerga was breaking into pieces after a few months of bombings against them with chemical weapons. Handren is telling me about how Iraq at that time had changed their war strategy to becoming technological, and this brought the consequences of chemical missiles pointed from Baghdad to Kurdish areas. Therefore the Peshmerga had to fight against an invisible enemy. But the Peshmerga themselves got more and more visible for their enemies caused by the big fires that burned down the villages and the protective nature to clear-felled areas, caused by the chemical gas bombings.

For Handren and all the Peshmerga and civilian people the trees and the grass had been the most effective hiding protection against air bombings till now. And because of the fruit, the most important food source in the mountain areas was growing on the burning trees the food also burned up at the same time.

As these gigantic human and environmental catastrophes had been put to an end a small number of Kurdish people returned home to their villages, but most of the people are still today living in Iran and other parts of the world to which they had to flee. As Dana said, Handren is also telling about how hard the life is for the ones that decided to return to their former homes. For example it takes about ten years for an apple tree to grow up and bring fruits, and what do you survive on during these ten years of waiting?

Handren knows that the chemical weapons Saddam Hussein was using had been sold to him by the United States ministry of defence during the cold war. It depended on the Iranian revolution that from 1979 was spreading all over the Islam World, all the way from Baghdad to Israel. From an American point of view there was a conscious about that Iran's plan was to occupy Baghdad and then continue towards Israel. They understood this as big threats against the countries in the Western World.

Iraq was an economically rich country depending on its oil and Saddam Hussein knew how to use his "anti-Islam" and "anti-shia" thought in front of the eyes of the West to make the West look at Iraq as a saviour of western interests, both political and economical.



The Western World should be protected of Saddam Hussein against the symptoms of the Iranian revolution as the West knew how Iran wanted to create a strong alliance against the Western World.

Therefore Handren is pointing out that all the destruction of the Kurdish population and their environment that till today hasn't recovered from the massacre, was sponsored by the political apparatus of the Western World. He is continuing by saying that chemical weapons always have had as its main purpose to be an effective weapon against the civilian population, and from there he is leaving the thought of the Western World's conscious support with this weapons open for the reader to by him/herself find an answer to.

### **Ending words**

When I wrote this essay for a course at the university the American attack at Iraq hadn't started, this text was actually taking its start some days before the 9/11 and kept going on in the shadows of a media chaotic autumn 2001. Therefore there are no reflections about the nowadays within it.

What I want to get a chance to point out though, as I now historically are jumping in the backdoor of this work, is that the question about the chemical gases over Kurdistan seems to keep on being as non-actual to research about... in wartime as in peacetime.

The deceases I was just mentioning is, still today, existing inside many people and the natural nourishment haven't recovered in the damaged areas.

That the now poisoned villages have been changed to dirty ramshackle towns in the former president Saddam Hussein does will to "modernisation" have also led to the creation of a mental vacuum in these areas. The hopelessness, that usually finds its place in the sphere where we can not see our future dreams, is in some way a special sign of that these ramshackle towns exist.

But in front of all it's a sign of the ground from which it was born, namely the reasons why Kurdish towns and villages got poisoned at all.

Here, at this very point, we have reached the purpose with this essay, to show up how the United Nations in their actions are moving in front of the West's demanding voice.

By illuminate the United Nation for a little while I tried to show partly their strong condemnation against chemical weapons during the twentieth century, and partly how they have let the problems for the Kurds pass without giving any kind of support, during the 1980ies.

All this kinds of ignorance are well documented, but at the same time not even touched on with the critical glance. In Sweden the United Nations have got the role of some kind of

wholly and world surrounding power in which no faults have a chance to get a room. Such a over-belief from the people, at the United Nations, are at the same time creating a possibility for the United Nations to find more and more places for paradoxes within the UN building, without having to question itself or being questioned.

France and the United States were the countries who most strongly supported Iraq during the Iraq/Iran war and the United States overthrown of Saddam Hussein in February 2004 can be seen as a chance to put things back on its right place, from having created a chaos by supporting him. The United Nations, on the other hand, have as we all know both before and during the war against Saddam strongly condemned the acts of the United States, in line with especially Western Europe. Does that sound familiar?

An honest thanks to Handren and Dana Sofi who, through their clear stories, described today's consequences for the Kurdish people and the Kurdish environment through the big perspective. The perspective which makes us sees the necessary unity in the cause and its effects.

The changeable chain which can be made conscious about and therefore can be directed in the next phase of change.

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At first this essay was created as a research work for the university course Global Development in 2001, and later on a translation of it was printed in the magazine: "Kurdistan studies journal".

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