

History of chemical weapon use

Chemicals have been used as weapons since ancient times – examples include poisoned arrows, boiling tar and arsenic smoke – but modern chemical warfare has its roots on the battlefields of World War I

■ **1914-18:** Poison gas used extensively by both sides during **World War I**, including choking agents such as **chlorine** and **phosgene**, as well as feared **mustard gas** – blister agent that chokes and burns skin. Use of gas causes estimated 90,000 deaths and over one million injuries



■ **1935-36:** Italy allegedly uses mustard gas against soldiers and civilians during invasion of **Ethiopia**

■ **1980-88:** Iraq uses mustard gas and nerve agents during **Iran-Iraq War**. Chemical attack on Iraqi Kurdish town of **Halabja** in 1988 kills 5,000 residents



■ **1939-45: World War II** – many countries make preparations in case poison gas is used, but threat never materializes

■ **1961-67:** U.S. uses “**Agent Orange**” herbicide in **Vietnam War** – decimating 20,000 sq km of forest. Vietnam estimates 400,000 people killed or maimed by its use, and 500,000 children born with birth defects



■ **1994/1995: Aum Shinrikyu** doomsday cult carries out attacks in Matsumoto, Japan, and on Tokyo subway system, killing 20 people with **sarin** nerve gas

■ **2002:** Russian special forces use chemical agent to end Moscow theatre crisis, killing 42 Chechen terrorists and over 100 hostages



■ **Aug 21, 2013:** Syrian opposition and activists say hundreds of people killed in chemical attack by regime on Damascus suburbs

■ **1980-84:** Afghan resistance and U.S. charge Soviets with using chemical weapons in **Afghanistan**