

# US Used Chemical Weapons in Fallujah Assault

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The US military used internationally banned chemical weapons, including nerve gas, during their assault on the Iraqi city of Fallujah last November, Dr Khalid ash Shaykhli, an Iraqi health ministry official, told a March 3 Baghdad press conference.

According to the Aljazeera satellite news network, Dr Shaykhli “said that researches, prepared by his medical team, prove that US occupation forces used internationally prohibited substances, including mustard gas, nerve gas and other burning chemicals in their attacks in the war-torn city”.

Chemical weapons such as mustard gas, nerve gas and napalm have been banned by international convention since the 1980s. The main justification made by the US, British and Australian governments in March 2003 for their invasion of Iraq was the claim — since proven to have been a complete fabrication — that Saddam Hussein’s regime possessed stockpiles of these banned weapons and was preparing to use them, via the al Qaeda terrorist network, to attack the United States.

Fallujah’s armed residents drove the US Army out of their city, located 55 kilometres west of Baghdad, in February 2004, and had defeated a three-week long attempt to reoccupy it by 4500 US marines in April. After three-month campaign of daily aerial attacks by US warplanes, on November 8 some 10,000 US Army and Marine Corps troops — backed by a massive artillery bombardment — attacked the city.

Shaykhli said that during the US assault, fleeing residents described “seeing corpses that had melted, which suggests that US troops used napalm gas, a poisonous compound of polystyrene and aircraft fuel which melts bodies”. He also said that his researchers had found evidence of the use of mustard gas and nerve gas. “We found dozens, not to say hundreds, of stray dogs, cats, and birds that had perished as a result of those gasses”, he told the press conference, which was held in the health ministry’s Baghdad building.

Aljazeera reported that the press conference “was attended by more than 20 Iraqi and foreign media networks, including the Iraqi ash-Sharqiyah TV network, the Iraqi as Sabah newspaper, the US Washington Post and the Knight-Ridder service”.

However, the only US news outlet to carry even a mention of the press conference was the Christian Science Monitor’s website. In an March 7 article on the US State Department’s annual report on other countries’ human rights record, the Boston-based daily reported that “Aljazeera also reported that Dr Khalid ash-Shaykhli, an official at Iraq’s health ministry, told a press conference in Baghdad that his department’s investigation in the conflict in Fallujah

show that US forces used “internationally banned weapons’ during its offensive last November, including napalm and jet fuel. The United States has never signed the treaty that banned the use of napalm against civilians.”

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