

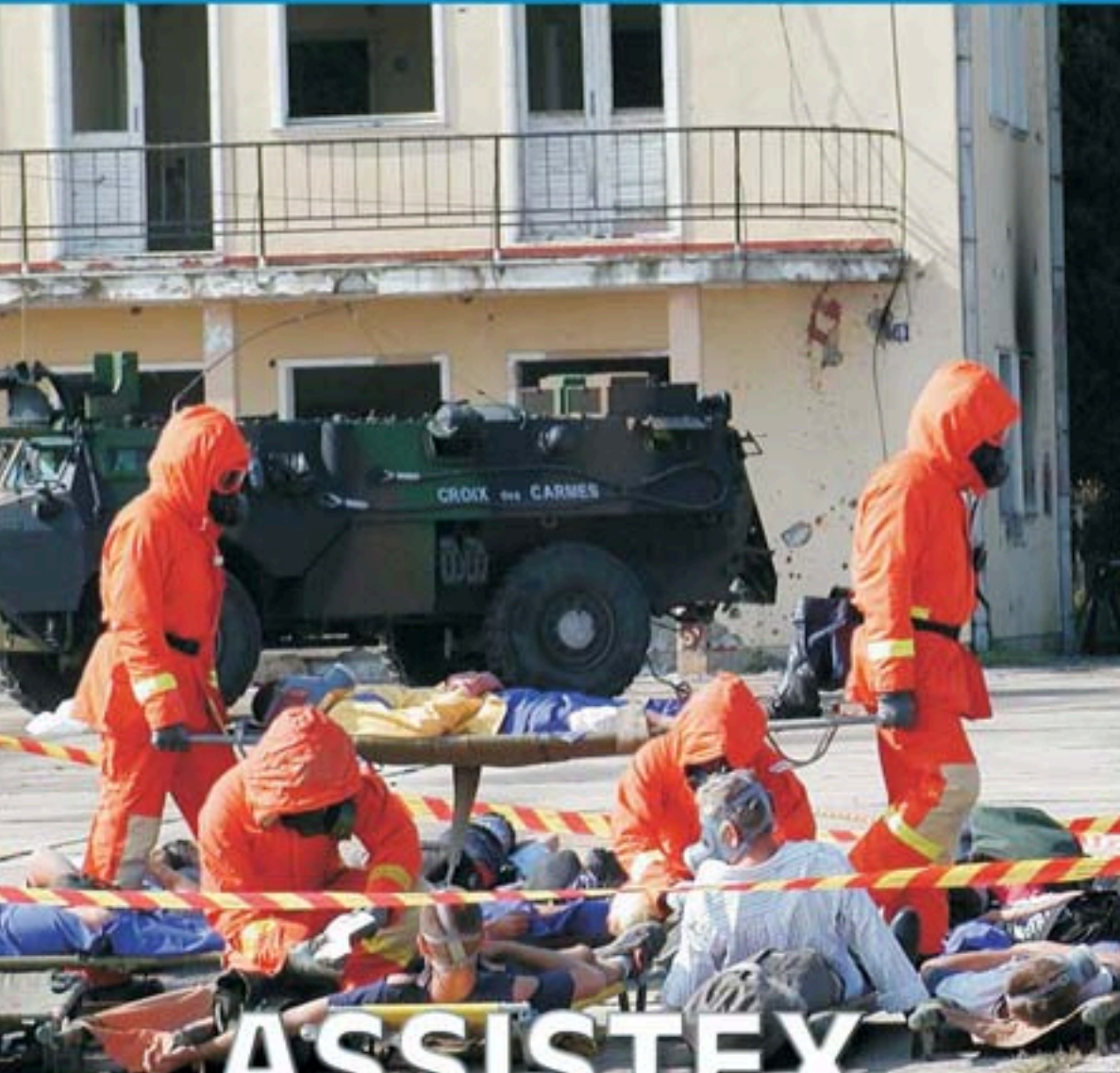
Chemical Disarmament



Organisation for
the Prohibition of
Chemical Weapons

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ASSISTEX

The First OPCW Exercise on the Delivery
of Assistance and Protection

Zadar, Croatia, September 2002

The First OPCW Exercise on the Delivery of Assistance - ASSISTEX I

10 to 14 September 2002, Zadar, Croatia

The First OPCW Exercise on the Delivery of Assistance (ASSISTEX I) was held from 10 to 14 September 2002 in Zadar, Croatia. The overall objective of the exercise was to assess the OPCW's preparedness (both States Parties and the Secretariat) for receiving an assistance request, and responding to a request for assistance.

According to the ASSISTEX I exercise scenario, on the territory of the Member State, Somewhereia, a terrorist cell was discovered producing chemical weapons. Other evidence indicated that an attack was imminent. Somewhereia then requested assistance from the OPCW under the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Organisation dispatched its Assistance Coordination and Assessment Team (ACAT) to the requesting State Party for assessment of the situation

Four days later, a chemical weapons attack took place at the capital's international airport. Two terminals, the baggage claim hall and the parking lot were contaminated. Following the attack, the ACAT entered the use mode and, following assessment of the situation, the teams started mitigating the results of the attack.

Within 24 hours, the operations led to complete elimination of the consequences of the attack including decontamination of the airport, vehicles and the assistance teams.

ASSISTEX I was the first step towards developing and maintaining capacity of the OPCW in providing timely, efficient and adequate assistance in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. The Secretariat is grateful to the Government of Croatia for hosting this exercise and also to all participating States Parties who contributed to the successful conclusion of ASSISTEX I.

Over nine hundred individuals from eight States Parties participated in the exercise.

The following national teams were represented:

- Croatia, the host country, provided a 37-member decontamination platoon with teams for reconnaissance, support, and decontamination;
- An eight-member team from the Czech

Republic provided a mobile laboratory and two support vehicles for GC/MS analysis of soil, liquid and air samples;

- Four experts for the EOD and six responders for rescue operations in a contaminated area were dispatched by Estonia;
- France supported ASSISTEX I with a C-130 transport aircraft, two VAB vehicles for reconnaissance, and two support trucks, as well as a fifteen-member team for detection, reconnaissance, sampling and contamination control;
- The Islamic Republic of Iran fielded a six-member medical team for training and manning triage and field hospital;
- Eight responders for training and for search and rescue operations in a CW contaminated area were made available by Lithuania;
- Sweden provided a C-130 transport aircraft, as well as a large number of vehicles for reconnaissance, detection and transfer of casualties. The twenty-five member Swedish Chemical Support Team (offered to the OPCW under Article X) provided their expertise in decontamination of casualties, transportation of casualties, training, search and rescue, reconnaissance and evacuation.
- A four-member instructor team, provided by Switzerland, trained the local population and first responders in the use of individual protective equipment (IPE). This equipment has been offered by Switzerland to the OPCW. In addition, the Swiss team scanned for and removed individuals from the contaminated area. Switzerland dispatched a transport helicopter, seventy pieces of IPE and eight Swiss CAMs equipment.

In addition, observers from the following States Parties were present:

Albania, Slovak Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan, Chile, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Islamic Republic of Iran, Slovenia, Finland, Czech Republic, Italy and the United States. ■

Assistance and
Protection
Branch