

The Indian government plans to betray half a million of its poorest people to please Union Carbide's new owners, another huge US multinational. DON'T LET THEM BURY JUSTICE IN BHOPAL.

Dec 3rd 1984, Bhopal, India: Half a million people are hit by a huge poison gas cloud released from a pesticides factory owned by Union Carbide USA. In the first night an estimated 8,000 people die agonised deaths: trampled to death, wracked with seizures or drowned in their own lung fluids. Tens of thousands more are permanently maimed and disabled. It is by far the worst industrial massacre in history and has been called "the Hiroshima of the chemical industry".



Nearly 18 years later: 30 people die every month from gas related ailments, over 120,000 are chronically ill, 80,000 are too ill to do the manual labour that used to sustain their families. Union Carbide left its factory site a 'global toxic hotspot': 12 different volatile organic chemicals and heavy metals like mercury leach into water supplies and mother's breast milk in the local population where 20,000 people live.

Still waiting for Justice: After a cynical out-of-court settlement with the Indian govt., Union Carbide paid out about \$500 to each injured victim: not enough to cover medical bills. Families of the dead received \$1,250. Criminal charges have been outstanding against Warren Anderson, ex CEO of Carbide and other officials for 11 years. They have refused to answer them and were proclaimed 'absconders from justice' by the Bhopal court. India has an extradition treaty with the US, but the authorities have not pursued extradition.

The ultimate betrayal: In an unprecedented move the Indian government has decided to reward Union Carbide's contempt by diluting charges to 'negligence', reducing the deaths of 20,000 people to the status of a car accident. The move results from pressure by Dow Chemicals, new owner of Union Carbide, who fear a transfer of liabilities to them would disrupt their largely unregulated investment plans for India.



Following the hunger strike by two gas survivors and one activist outside the Indian parliament in New Delhi in protest at the Indian government's proposal, concerned and outraged people all around the world are joining a mass hunger strike. The mass action is led by Diane Wilson, a shrimp boat captain, who is fasting outside the gates of Dow (formerly Carbide) in Sea Drift, Texas, USA. Thousands around the world are expected to join her. Hunger strikers to date have included French author Dominique Lapierre, Spanish writer Javier Moro and Gianfranco Bettin, Mayor of Venice, Italy.

What you can do: Join the protest, join the fast. Go to www.bhopal.net, where you can register the days that you will fast. Visit www.corpwatchindia.org to send an electronic fax of protest to the Indian government. Check these websites for the latest news and for other ways to help. Download our 'friends' email action' about the hunger strike and please forward it to all your friends.

Latest update from the hunger-strike, victory and more waiting: At a mass rally in Delhi on Tuesday 16th July, the 18th day of fasting, the two women hunger strikers Tara Bai and Rashida Bi collapsed and are being cared for in hospital. Sathyu Sarangi continued to fast. **The government conceded the strikers' second demand** - gas victims' money will not be distributed to non gas-affected wards. On 17th July, **the Bhopal court accepted our petition** opposing the dilution of charges. **The judge adjourned the case until 27th August.** Sathyu then ended his fast with some orange juice. The fast was immediately taken up around the world by volunteers in a mass relay hunger strike to keep pressure on the Indian government.

Diane Wilson leads mass worldwide hunger strike: In Sea Drift, Texas, on July 18th Diane Wilson, a 52 year old shrimp boat skipper (remember Forrest Gump?) and long time opponent of the chemical companies that pollute her community's drinking water and the seas she fishes in San Antonio Bay, began a hunger strike outside the gates of a Dow (formerly Carbide) plant.

Diane says: "My life as a fisherwoman has taught me one thing, that there are no seas with lines and divisions. So similarly if there is a border that separates me as an American from the anguish and sorrow of my sisters and brothers in Bhopal and their fight for justice, then that line is a false and lying one. All the great religions teach that we are one. One woman's pain is a pain to all. An injustice to one is an injustice to all. Bhopal is a symbol of the unfinished business of justice that lies before all mankind and the struggle should never be abandoned."



Support growing around the world: July 16th, the day before the court hearing was marked by demonstrations in many parts of the world. In Delhi, a thousand gas survivors marched on Parliament. People fasted en masse in Baroda and Chennai, India. In Cape Town protesters picketed the Indian High Commission and handed in letters of protest, a vigil in London culminated with the handing over of a petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures to the Indian High Commissioner. In Venice, Italy, Mayor Gianfranco Pettin and key members of his team were on a three day hunger strike in support of Tara, Rashida and Sathyu.

We, the hunger-strikers strongly beseech the Government of India to withdraw its application for dilution of charges before the 27 August hearing at the Bhopal Magistrates court, take immediate steps to extradite Warren Anderson, and act rapidly to hold Dow Chemicals, Union Carbide's new owner, responsible for the pending medical and environmental rehabilitation liabilities in Bhopal. **Our demand that the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers rescind its decision of distributing to the 20 newly-added wards compensation funds that rightfully belong to the survivors of the Carbide disaster has been conceded - we have won this point.**

We further demand and require that Dow Chemicals accept pending liability of Union Carbide's gas victims in Bhopal, just as it has accepted liability for Union Carbide's asbestos and other victims in the USA; specifically **1)** that Mr Warren Anderson and executives of Union Carbide USA who have been absconding from criminal charges in the Bhopal court return to Bhopal to face justice; **2)** that Dow accept responsibility for cleaning up the contaminated soil and groundwater of the abandoned factory (picture left); **3)** that Dow agree forthwith to pay a just level of compensation to its victims most of whom have received only derisory and inadequate amounts to compensate them for nearly 18 years of suffering, and to make adequate payments for long-term medical care, research and monitoring of victims; **4)** that Dow release information on the composition of the leaked gases and the best way to treat them, previously held back as a 'trade secret'; **5)** that Dow pay for the economic rehabilitation of families impoverished by the disaster.



A message of support from Bianca Jagger: "What happened in 1984 was an unspeakable tragedy, what has happened since is a travesty of justice, an abuse of fundamental human rights on a contemptuous scale. It cannot be allowed to continue. Whether or not the Indian government has its way on Wednesday, the fight for justice must go on. I call upon decent people all round the world who believe in fairness and justice to join us in supporting the poor, the helpless, and the abused gas survivors of Bhopal."

For latest updates on the mass worldwide hunger strike and to take part, please see www.bhopal.net, www.corpwatchindia.com or contact Gary Cohen gcohen@igc.org; Casey Harrell casey.harrell@wdc.greenpeace.org; Diane Wilson wilsonalamobay@aol.com; Krishnaveni kinnu@subvertisement.org; Neil Tangri ntangri@essential.org