

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE IN BHOPAL

NEWS RELEASE

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Bhopal Activists in New York City deliver Arrest Warrant for Warren Anderson and Union Carbide Corporation to appear in Indian Criminal Court

Bhopal Disaster Survivors and Supporters Around the World Express Outrage for Denial of Justice in Light of Recent Verdicts

NEW YORK - On June 14, 2010 members of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal, Wetlands Activism Collective/Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, and of Kids for a Better Future spoke to media and attempted to hand-delivered copies of a warrant and criminal charges against Union Carbide Corporation and against its former CEO, Warren Anderson (who remains in hiding), to the offices of their attorneys, Kelly, Drye & Warren in connection with a 25-year old criminal case against them for their criminal responsibility for the 1984 Union Carbide gas disaster in Bhopal, India. The Kids for a Better Future leaders were turned away by security guards.

The two groups delivered the warrants and charges to remind both Carbide and Anderson that although the District Court in Bhopal last week handed down a slap on the wrist to the executives and managers of Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL), the criminal charges against the American parent company and its CEO remain outstanding. After 19 years of criminal proceedings, seven UCIL executives were found guilty of “death by negligence” (the legal equivalent of responsibility for an auto accident), sentenced to just two years’ imprisonment and fined the equivalent of a \$2,000 per defendant. Just one year ago, after the U.S. Department of State flatly refused to take action on a duly-issued extradition warrant against Anderson and UCC, the Chief Judicial Magistrate for Bhopal re-issued a new arrest warrant to address American objections. Efforts are ongoing by Bhopal survivors in India to demand action by the Government of India on that warrant.

The survivors in Bhopal will not relent from their 25-year long struggle for justice in Bhopal and will pursue extradition against UCC and Anderson to secure their appearance to stand trial for their criminal responsibility for the 1984 disaster. After nearly 25,000 people have died as a result of exposure to Union Carbide’s deadly

methylisocyanate gas, after over 100,000 people have suffered a host of debilitating medical problems, and as a new generation is being born with horrible birth defects, it is imperative to hold all responsible parties to account in this disaster.

In 1992, both Union Carbide Corporation and Warren Anderson were declared absconders from justice by the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Bhopal. Internal documents from the United States Department of State indicate that the Department of State has peremptorily declared Anderson innocent of all charges and, in a political decision, stated that extradition of an American CEO would have a chilling effect on American multinationals seeking to do business overseas. As the United States faces the British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon disaster, the American people will surely demand—and deserve—that all responsible parties be held to account, even the CEO and parent corporation of a multinational entity like BP. The people of Bhopal deserve no less.

Regrettably, though, the Bhopal survivors have been told to accept less. A 1989 civil settlement between the Government of India and Union Carbide following the gas disaster was inadequate and has left survivors bereft of adequate medical treatment or research.

Meanwhile, the environmental disaster in Bhopal is an ongoing toxic tragedy. While the Union Carbide pesticide factory was in operation in Bhopal up until that fateful night in 1984, the factory was producing toxic waste on a daily basis which was dumped first in pits on the grounds of the factory and later in specially constructed “solar evaporation ponds” which promptly leaked liquid toxic waste into the groundwater. This groundwater was used as drinking water by thousands of slum residents near the Union Carbide facility. Union Carbide was aware of this toxic legacy as of 1989 and now Dow Chemical (which acquired Union Carbide as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 2001) refuses to take responsibility for this new disaster that has poisoned thousands and is producing a new generation of suffering as children are being born with horrific birth defects due to their parents’ exposure to untold toxic chemical compounds. Various civil lawsuits against Dow Chemical in New York have been pending now in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan for nearly ten years and remain in litigation as Dow flatly refuses to accept responsibility.

The International Campaign for Justice for Bhopal (ICJB) is a coalition led by four survivor organizations along with environmental, social justice, progressive Indian, and human rights groups supporters around the world. ICJB works to hold the Indian Government and Dow Chemical Corporation (the current owner of Union Carbide) accountable for the ongoing chemical disaster in Bhopal, India. It was set up to address the grave injustices suffered by the half million Bhopal Gas Disaster survivors.

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