

April 15th, 2005

Consul General Mr. Pramathesh Rath
Consulate General of India
3 East 64th Street,
New York, NY 10021

Dear Mr. Pramathesh Rath,

We the undersigned, and gathered today outside the consulate, wish to make known to you and to the Government of India, our great concern for the situation in Bhopal, India

Twenty years ago, on Dec. 3rd, 1984, 7,000 people in Bhopal were gassed to death after a catastrophic chemical leak at a Union Carbide pesticide plant. More than 150,000 people were left severely disabled—of whom another 15,000 have since died of their injuries—in a disaster now widely acknowledged as the world's worst-ever industrial disaster.

In the years since that terrible night in 1984, a second tragedy has unfolded. Today, twenty years after the Bhopal disaster, those who survived the gas remain sick, and many continue to die. Furthermore, according to Sambhavna Trust Clinic, exposure to the toxins that Union Carbide left behind in Bhopal has resulted in chronic, debilitating illnesses for at least another 120,000 people, for whom treatment has been largely ineffective.

Bhopal was not only a disaster, but was also, and continues to be, a fundamental violation of human rights. Thousands of people in Bhopal were denied their right to life, and possibly hundreds of thousands have had their right to health undermined. Innumerable families, already living in poverty, have suffered illness and bereavement, further impairing their ability to realize their right to a decent standard of living.

These and other fundamental human rights are explicitly guaranteed in international treaties, which are legally binding on the Indian state. The Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life, and the Indian Supreme Court has held that this includes the right to health and to protection from environmental pollution. Even so, those struggling for justice and the right to a remedy in Bhopal have been frustrated in their efforts.

Over the past 20 years, the Indian Government has systematically denied these rights to the people of Bhopal.

This is why we are here today. More than 1,500 Amnesty International members, organized by Amnesty International Group 133 of Somerville, Massachusetts, along with supporters from several other organizations, have converged here to demand justice for the victims of human rights abuses in Bhopal. Simultaneous meetings or demonstrations are being held at the Indian consulates in Chicago, Houston, and San Francisco; the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC; and in Delhi, Bhopal, and Chennai in India. Today thousands of people worldwide have joined together to demand justice for the people of Bhopal, and action from the Government of India.

Today's events are part of a major worldwide campaign for human rights in Bhopal, organized by Amnesty International. On the 20th anniversary of the disaster, Amnesty International published a report (*'Clouds of Injustice: Bhopal Disaster Twenty Years On'*) calling for Dow Chemical and the Indian Government to take action to ensure justice for those affected by the gas leak and the chemical poisons that Union Carbide left behind. Amnesty International believes that urgent action is needed to safeguard and protect the human rights of the people of Bhopal.

In accord with Amnesty International's recommendations, we demand that the Indian Government:

- Ensure the effective and prompt decontamination and clean up of the Bhopal site by Union Carbide Corporation (UCC)/Dow Chemical Company, or to undertake the job if UCC/Dow is either unwilling or unable to do so.
- Ensure that Dow/UCC provide full reparations, restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for the continuing damage done to health and the environment by the ongoing contamination of the site.
- Ensure a regular supply of adequate safe water for the domestic use of the affected communities in line with the order issued by the Supreme Court.
- Ensure adequate and accessible healthcare for all survivors, in particular by making sure the offer of free health care is extended without discrimination to all those affected by the disaster, including to children born of parents affected by the gas leak.

Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary activist movement working for human rights, with 1.7 million members around the globe. It is independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. It does not support or oppose any government or political system, nor does it support or oppose the views of those whose rights it seeks to protect. It is concerned solely with the impartial protection of human rights. Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

Sincerely,

David Airey

On behalf of Amnesty International Group 133, Somerville, Massachusetts, and the following supporting organizations:

International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal
Students for Bhopal
Association for India's Development (Boston)
Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia
Environmental Health Fund