

GREENPEACE

BHOPAL: EXPOSURE OF A CORPORATE CRIME

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BACKGROUND: GREENPEACE

On 15 September 1971, a spirited band of activists staged their first anti-nuclear weapons protest at Amchitka, off Alaska, by sailing a boat into the test zone. Their commitment and courage forced the U.S. government to abandon nuclear testing at Amchitka island and led to the formation of Greenpeace.

In the years that followed Greenpeace has become a global symbol for people seeking to challenge those who pollute and damage the planet.

Greenpeace is not the first organization to draw attention to environmental problems, nor will it be the last. But it has highlighted those issues and mobilized public response around the world, in a way no other organization has achieved before.

In the process Greenpeace has helped create something that is far bigger than all the individuals involved, that will outlive them all and even Greenpeace itself, a growing global community; environmentally aware and willing to make a stand and be heard; in its quest for a green and peaceful planet.

Greenpeace has a presence in 40 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific and focuses on the most crucial world wide threats to our planet's biodiversity and environment such as: **Oceans and Ancient Forest protection, Fossil fuel phase out and the promotion of renewable energy to stop climate change, Nuclear disarmament and an end to nuclear contamination, Elimination of toxic chemicals and Preventing the release of genetically engineered organisms into nature.**

In India, Greenpeace has been active since 1994 and has been campaigning for: Reducing Toxic Pollution, Promoting Renewable Energy, Fighting Against The Release of Genetically Modified Organisms Into The Environment, Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Demanding Corporate Accountability On Environmental Issues.

Greenpeace relies almost entirely upon voluntary donations from individual donors. It is your donations that keep us in action. We do not accept funding from governments or corporations, as this would compromise our independence, aims and integrity.

We believe that our real power lies outside Greenpeace, in the hearts and minds of people who are as impatient as we are and who find us an inspiration for change.

Each of us must do our part.

BHOPAL: DECEMBER 2/3, 1984

"I remember the night of the gas leak as though it were yesterday. I lost my child and could not conceive since. To see the culprits of this disaster being let off by a shameless government is too much to bear. They seem to treat the world's worst industrial disaster as though it had been a car crash."

Tara Rai, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Survivor

It all began on the night of December 2/3, 1984, when 40 tonnes of lethal gases leaked from Union Carbide Corporation's pesticide factory in Bhopal, India. Before anyone could realize the full impact of the disaster an area of about 40 sq.km, with a resident population of over half a million, was engulfed in dense clouds of poison. People woke up coughing, gasping for breath, their eyes burning. Many fell dead as they ran. By the third day of the disaster, an estimated 8000 people had died from direct exposure to the gases and another 500,000 injured.

Today, the number of deaths stands at 20,000.

If this was the beginning of a disaster, the years that have followed have been much worse as the tragedy has meant a slow but definite grind to an early death for most of the survivors. Their lungs remain impaired. Their capacity to work has diminished. Children born today to survivors are facing health impacts from the chemical industry's toxic legacy.

The sufferings of the gas survivors living around the abandoned Union Carbide factory are aggravated by the presence of several tons of toxic wastes scattered and exposed to the environment around the factory premises.

Survivors' pain has been redoubled by the fact that the perpetrators of the disaster have been let off cheaply. They have never been held fully accountable for the civil and criminal offence they committed. Calls from the survivors of Bhopal for proper compensation, rehabilitation and clean up of the toxic site have been ignored.

Justice remains more elusive than ever for the survivors of the Bhopal disaster.

The chilling statistics of a continuing tragedy:

- More than 8,000 people killed due to exposure to the lethal gasses in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.
- More than 500,000 people exposed to the poison gasses left to suffer a lifetime of ill health and mental trauma.
- Nearly 30 people continue to die from exposure-related illnesses every month.
- At least 1, 50,000 people, including children born to gas-exposed parents, suffer debilitating exposure-related health effects.
- Tons of poisonous pesticides and other hazardous wastes lying scattered and abandoned in the DOW-Carbide factory premises, insidiously poisoning the ground water and contaminating the land.

GREENPEACE INDIA AND BHOPAL

1999



New Delhi 1999 © Greenpeace

- Greenpeace studied Union Carbide's abandoned factory in Bhopal to assess the environmental condition of the site and its surroundings and produced a report "Bhopal Legacy". This report continues to be cited by the press, local groups, the government and politicians. Following this, Greenpeace sent a memorandum to the Minister of Environment with their demands on the Bhopal issue.

- Greenpeace's ship the Rainbow Warrior visited India to mark the 15th Anniversary of the disaster in Bhopal. The ship's visit raised the ongoing Bhopal tragedy to international prominence.

2000-2002

- On August 14, 2000 Greenpeace organized a cyber action. Thousands of people including the survivors visited Internet booths set up especially for that day in Bhopal and sent emails to Union Carbide demanding that it accept its liabilities and clean up the contaminated site. As a result the Union carbide site shut down for many hours.
- Bottles of contaminated water, packaged as mineral water, labelled "refreshingly toxic" and "unfit for human consumption except in Bhopal", taken from the wells around the abandoned factory site were delivered to the Dow offices world wide.



Bhopal 2000 © Greenpeace

- Greenpeace prepared a full protocol for containment of the Hazardous waste on site.
- Greenpeace India representatives along with the survivors raised the issue at the Dow Chemicals AGM, held in the USA. Following this, DOW CEO met the people of Bhopal for the first time.
- Local residents and Greenpeace campaigners entered the Union Carbide site in Bhopal to contain part of the toxic waste on site and show Dow how it should be dealing with its own mess. Despite the worthy intentions, police arrested everyone within one hour for trespassing. A strange world indeed where the people responsible can ignore the continued poisoning of thousands but police arrest anyone seeking to bring the world's attention to the problem?



Bombay 2003@ Greenpeace

2003-2004

- Greenpeace and the survivors of the Bhopal industrial disaster tried to return a few barrels of the waste generated by Dow Chemicals. The barrels were transported all the way from India to Dow's largest chemical plant in Europe, Netherlands.
- Greenpeace activists blocked the entrances to the Houston Dow Center after delivering 250 gallons of contaminated water taken from wells in Bhopal. Protestors demanded that Dow meet with Bhopal survivors to discuss their legitimate grievances and that the company drop two civil suits it has filed in India against Bhopal survivors.
- Activists and volunteers in 18 countries marked December 3rd 2003 (the 19th anniversary of the Union Carbide gas disaster in Bhopal), as the Global day of Action against Corporate Crime. Greenpeace India, one of the key organizations in the ICJB (International Council for Justice in Bhopal) organized a 'die-in' protest in Mumbai, where students and volunteers lay down on the sidewalk of a prominent street, to remind Mumbai citizens of the horrific night of the disaster, and of Dow Chemicals' pending liabilities in Bhopal.
- Greenpeace India activists received support from hundreds of people in Chennai expressing their solidarity for the Bhopal Gas Disaster survivors, by signing a banner that said "20 Years is Enough – Implead DOW in Bhopal Crimes. Survivors Demand Clean Water, Compensation, Site Clean-Up and Rehabilitation"
- After intensive lobbying efforts from Greenpeace and other partner organizations, a communication was sent from the Government of India to the US court, empowering the US court to direct Union Carbide the perpetrators of the Bhopal gas disaster, to clean up the toxic chemicals in and around the Bhopal factory.
- Greenpeace India was also successful in getting the government of Madhya Pradesh to issue a communication that admitted to the seriousness of the contamination and that *Union Carbide* should pay for it.
- Greenpeace mobilized more than 6000 people to sign a cyber petition addressed to the Government of India for Justice in Bhopal.

Greenpeace India's overall goal for the remaining of the year 2004 will be to ensure that the Bhopal Disaster site is cleaned up, using the best available technologies and not by environmentally disastrous clean up proposals.

We will continue to harangue Dow Chemicals (owner of Union Carbide) and lobby with the Government of India to hold Dow liable for this clean-up.



EXPOSURE: PORTRAIT OF A CORPORATE CRIME

The world renowned photographer, Raghu Rai, arrived in Bhopal hours after the gas leak. "What I saw was to change my life. It was an unprecedented scene of chaos. I vowed then and there to continue my work, to do all I could to show the world what happens to people when corporations are not held liable for their operations, when they are allowed to cut costs and safety standards" said Raghu Rai.

This moving exhibition offers a unique photographic insight into the human and environmental tragedy that has engulfed the Indian city of Bhopal since December 1984. It documents both the immediate aftermath of the explosion and the ongoing struggle of survivors determined to secure justice from the chemical giant even though they have lost their families, economic security and health.

This collection shows what happens when companies such as Union Carbide - now merged into Dow - are not held accountable for the disasters and pollution they cause. It gives a voice to the people whose lives have been torn apart by a corporate crime.

Greenpeace India has showcased this exhibition both nationally and internationally, this has raised the ongoing tragedy to international prominence.

In India the exhibition was first displayed in Mumbai in the year 2002. Subsequently it has been displayed in Delhi, Bhopal, Madras, Cochin, Bangalore and Calcutta.

Internationally the exhibition has traveled to Switzerland, Italy, Spain, China, Argentina, Nordic, USA, Chile, France, Brazil, Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

The aim of this proposal is to garner financial support which will enable us to showcase this exhibition in many more cities in India to remind the people of the horrific Union Carbide disaster, the survivors' continuing struggle for justice and to highlight Union Carbide's lack of corporate accountability that allows the industry to act irresponsibly without caring about the consequences. This will bring us closer to achieving our objective of haranguing Dow and lobbying with the Indian Government to hold Dow liable for the clean-up of the factory site.

BUDGET

Activities	Rs.
Rent (Exhibition Hall)	10,000
Courier cost of pictures	8000
Raghu Rai travel and lodging (for 3 days at the exhibition)	26,000
Travel and Lodging for 4 people (2 Bhopal survivors and 2 Greenpeace staff)	36,000
TOTAL COST FOR HOSTING ONE EXHIBITION	80,000