

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 5, 2008

The Honorable Manmohan Singh  
Prime Minister of India  
South Block, Raisina Hill  
New Delhi 110 011  
India

Dear Prime Minister Singh:

We are writing to express our support for the people of Bhopal, India, victims of the world's worst industrial disaster in 1984, when toxic gases escaped from a Union Carbide factory. The survivors marched 500 miles in February and March from Bhopal to New Delhi, where they have been for over 60 days. We urge you to personally meet the survivor groups and address their long-standing demands for justice and a life of dignity.

As you know, on the night of December 2, 1984, 27 tons of poisonous gas, including methyl isocyanate, leaked from a storage tank at the Union Carbide Corporation's pesticide plant in Bhopal and quickly spread to the surrounding residential areas. Official estimates indicate a death toll of 3,000 lives in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, with unofficial estimates putting the toll much higher at 8,000. To date, the death toll has climbed to more than 20,000 according to an Amnesty International report.

Although it has been more than 20 years since the disaster, approximately 10-30 people continue to die every month in Bhopal from toxic exposure and another 150,000 people suffer long-term health consequences. The effects of the toxic gases also appear to be harming the next generation, as overwhelming evidence is surfacing that points to a higher incidence of health effects and birth defects among children born to gas-affected people.

The disaster raises fundamental questions about government and corporate responsibility. Survivors are still waiting for appropriate compensation and adequate medical assistance and treatment. Despite a May 2004 order from the Supreme Court of India that clean drinking water should be supplied immediately, more than 25,000 people in Bhopal are forced to consume water known to be laced with poisons seeping out of Union Carbide's toxic wastes in and around the infamous factory. The plant site has not been cleaned up and toxic waste continues to pollute the environment and contaminate drinking supplies in the area.

More over, no one has been held accountable for the leak and its after-effects. It is outrageous that the executives of Union Carbide and its successor, Dow Chemical, have yet to be brought to justice. Survivors have made continuous demands through both

protest and litigation, but it has had little effect. We hope that the Indian Government pursues Union Carbide and Dow Chemical for their civil and criminal liabilities in the country.

The conduct of American corporations outside the US is a long-standing concern of ours, especially with regards to environmental protection standards. The US-run Union Carbide built a poorly designed pesticide plant that poisoned local water, and therefore should be held accountable for these crimes and their disregard of basic human rights. Such issues involving the lack of environmental protection caused abroad by American corporations are increasingly before US courts either because foreign jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to adjudicate those claims. In this case, US corporations have refused to submit to the jurisdiction of foreign courts. There are existing civil cases for the clean up of the contaminated plant sites that are pending in the US. Although these cases may be alleged by some as interference of a foreign government, the gravity of the arguments being asserted by the defendants of these cases is significant.

At a time when a new generation of victims is surfacing among children born to gas-affected parents and those exposed to contaminated drinking water, it is our hope that the Indian Government take care of those affected by this horrific tragedy. In addition, the Government should hold Union Carbide and its parent company, Dow Chemical, responsible for the disaster.

The victims from the Bhopal tragedy are asking for and deserve an empowered and fully funded commission. This Commission would execute social, economic and medical rehabilitation, implement an environmental clean-up of the polluted land and provide funding for clean drinking water. It is our hope that the Indian Government will set up this commission to address the pressing needs of the hundreds of thousands affected by the disaster.

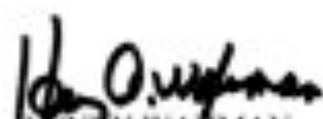
We support the Bhopalis in their epic march and urge you to meet with the survivor groups in order to address their enduring demands. Thank you for your consideration and commitment. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

  
TAMMY BALDWIN  
Member of Congress

  
BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

  
HENRY WAXMAN  
Member of Congress

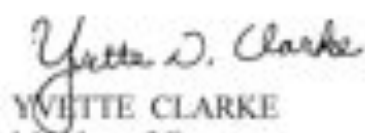
  
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Member of Congress

  
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