

Bhopal ruling: Justice denied

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It's been almost 29 years since a Union Carbide pesticide plant exploded in Bhopal, India. The 1984 tragedy — one of the worst industrial accidents in history — has killed at least 20,000 people, and contamination at the accident site continues to put the surrounding community's health at risk.

Last month, a New York court once again denied justice for Bhopal victims when it upheld a previous judgment dismissing all claims against Union Carbide and its former CEO, Warren Anderson. Attorney Rajan Sharma, who represented the survivors, called the decision a "whitewash."

The Bhopali plaintiffs demanded that the corporation [take responsibility](#) for the long term health harms of "'toxic substances [that] seeped into a ground aquifer, polluting the soil and drinking water supply in residential communities surrounding the former Bhopal plant site.'"

Avoiding justice

Since the gas explosion, Union Carbide was purchased by Dow Chemical, one of the [Big 6](#) corporations that dominate the pesticide and genetically engineered seed industries. These transnational giants routinely insulate themselves from accountability for damage their products cause to the environment, food security and human health by wielding [unprecedented influence](#) over political and legal systems around the world.

Warren Anderson skipped out of India on a private jet the night after the Bhopal explosion, and while he remains an "absconder from justice" under permanent arrest warrant in India, efforts to extradite him have received no support from any U.S. administration. He lives in retirement in the Hamptons (one of his nine homes), denying culpability.

The recent court decision ends 14 years of litigation on behalf of Bhopalis who experience ongoing health harms from the accident.

Not forgotten

Though the U.S. justice system has failed Bhopalis, organizers around the world continue working hard to ensure the crimes are not forgotten. [Campaigners](#) in India, Britain and the U.S. are undeterred.

In December 2011 PAN International organized a [people's court](#) in India to indict the Big 6 for the

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harms their pesticide products have caused to human health and livelihood, and their violations of human rights. Such efforts bring much needed public focus to these sweeping harms — and the lack of binding mechanisms to hold the corporations accountable for them.

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