

Michael H. Posner  
Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Posner,

As a broad coalition of organizations representing affected communities from Alaska to Florida, we are writing to you on this International Human Rights Day to bring to your attention a critical human rights issue taking place here in the United States and around the world: that of **human rights violations perpetrated by the six largest agrochemical transnational corporations**. These corporations - in particular the six largest pesticide corporations - Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow, DuPont, Bayer, and BASF - continue to produce, market, and profit from highly hazardous pesticides that have serious human health, livelihood, and environmental impacts, **and to do so in direct violation of the precepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other human rights instruments**.

In December of last year, affected communities around the world who have been harmed by these six corporations presented their cases of human rights violations to the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) Session on Agrochemical Transnational Corporations. They included:

- Voices from Arctic Indigenous Peoples, who have had their ways of life, including their traditional foods, practices, and livelihoods, contaminated and threatened by pesticide pollution that travels to the Arctic from around the world through a process known as global distillation;
- Voices from the Midwestern United States, where farmers' livelihoods are being threatened by the Monsanto corporation's harassment and persecution of farmers;
- And voices from Florida, where African-American farmworkers who used to work on vegetable farms around one of the most polluted lakes in the United States are suffering from multiple chronic illnesses while still awaiting aid for the egregious health harms they suffered, years after these farms were shut down for their enormous impact on the environment and wildlife; as well as dozens of other cases around the world. The full indictment brought forward to the PPT is attached here.

After hearing these cases, an esteemed jury of international experts pronounced these six corporations – along with the governments of the United States, Switzerland, and Germany - **guilty of “gross, widespread, and systematic violations” of human rights**. This verdict (attached) was handed down one year ago, on December 6, 2011. We have yet to see the US government act to protect the rights of its people and of the global community from violations by corporations based right here in the United States.

We look now to your office as the bearer of an immense responsibility - protecting and promoting democracy, human rights, and the rights of labor - and urge you to take decisive action based on your mandate and the global human rights crises that are clearly being perpetrated daily by the pesticide industry, to signal that the US will play a leadership role in addressing these egregious violations.

**We therefore request a meeting with you and your key staff to discuss the role of your office in addressing this pressing issue at the national and international level. We also respectfully request a written response to this letter by January 10, 2013** (please address to Devika Ghai at [devika@panna.org](mailto:devika@panna.org)). We look forward to working with you.

*Signed and endorsed by the following governments and organizations:*

- ❖ Eddie Ungott, Tribal President, Native Village of Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska; **USA**
- ❖ Mitchell Kiyuklook, Tribal President, Native Village of Savoonga, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska; **USA**
- Pamela Miller, Vi Waghiyi, and Heather McCausland, Alaska Community Action on Toxics; **USA**
- Maria Elena Rosa, Alianza por una major Calidad de Vida; **Chile**
- Alicia Koutsoulieris, Amnesty International Chapter 519; **International**
- Rahmat Ajiguna, Asian Peasants Coalition; **Asia**
- Lisa Arkin, Beyond Toxics; **USA**
- Paige Tomaselli, Center for Food Safety; **USA**
- Lucille Bertuccio, Center for Sustainable Living; **USA**
- Denise Diaz, Central Florida Jobs with Justice; **USA**
- Barbara Warren, Citizens' Environmental Coalition; **USA**
- Kathleen A. Curtis, LPN, Clean and Healthy New York; **USA**
- John Harris, Community Alliance for Positive Solutions; **Australia**
- Suad Eltayeb Ahmed, Community Development Association; **Sudan**
- Y. Armando Nieto, Community Food & Justice Coalition; **USA**
- Thomas Kerns, PhD, Environment and Human Rights Advisory; **USA**
- Jeannie Economos, Farmworker Association of Florida; **USA**
- Maria Rodriguez, Florida Immigrant Coalition; **USA**
- JoAnn Lo, Food Chain Workers Alliance; **USA**
- Lauren Ornelas, Food Empowerment Project; **USA**
- Carleen Pickard, Global Exchange; **USA**
- Masahiro Watarida, Globalization Watch Hiroshima; **Japan**
- Rick Hind, Greenpeace; **International**
- Naji Kodeih, PhD, IndyACT; **Lebanon**
- Laura Carro-Klingholz, PhD, Initiative Mexiko; **Mexico / Germany**
- Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council; **International**
- Manny Calonzo & Olga Speranskaya, IPEN\*; **International**
- Sena Alouka, Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement; **Togo**
- Jose T. Bravo, Just Transition Alliance; **USA**
- Wilfredo Marbella, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilpinas (KMP); **Philippines**
- Navina Khanna, Live Real; **USA**
- Gregory Schell, Migrant Farmworker Justice Project, Florida Legal Services, Inc.; **USA**
- Dorothy Felix, Mossville Environmental Action Now; **USA**
- Betty Obbo, National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE); **Uganda**
- Zenaida Soriano, National Peasant Women Network (AMIHAN); **Philippines**
- Susan JunFish, Parents for a Safer Environment; **USA**
- Sarojeni Rengam, Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific; **Asia and the Pacific**
- Carina Weber, Pesticide Action Network Germany; **Germany**
- Devika Ghai, Pesticide Action Network North America; **USA**
- Martha Dina Arguello, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles; **USA**
- Patricia Gutierrez, Red de Acción a los Agrotóxicos de Venezuela; **Venezuela**
- Javier Souza Casadinho, Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL); **Latin America**
- Fernando Bejarano, Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de México (RAPAM); **Mexico**
- Rachel Rosenberg, Safer Pest Control Project; **USA**
- Debbie Barker, Save Our Seeds, International; **International**
- Joan Mencher, PhD, The Second Chance Foundation; **USA**

- Shiela Davis, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition; **USA**
- Hải Võ, South Asians and Asian Pacific Islanders for Sustainable Agriculture; **USA**
- Desmond D'Sa, South Durban Community Environmental Alliance; **South Africa**
- Joanna Welborn, Student Action with Farmworkers; **USA**
- Ana Duncan Pardo, Toxic Free North Carolina; **USA**
- Rita Lucey, United Nations Association of the United States of America, Chapter 260; **USA**

\*IPEN: **The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) is a global network of more than 700 public interest non-governmental organizations** working together for the elimination of persistent organic pollutants, on an expedited yet socially equitable basis.