



Protesters and survivors of the disaster express rage over the tragedy that affected 500,000 people. About 40 tonnes of lethal gas from a Union Carbide plant leaked into the air on Dec. 3, 1984.

Bhopal gas leak remains India's open wound

Thirty years after the world's worst industrial disaster, hundreds of survivors rally for justice and compensation

RISHI LEKHI

BHOPAL, INDIA-Hundreds of survivors of the Bhopal gas leak took to the streets Wednesday to mark the 30th anniversary of the world's worst industrial disaster, with protests demanding harsher punishments for those responsible and more compensation for the victims of the trag-

On the morning of Dec. 3, 1984, a pesticide plant run by Union Carbide

leaked about 40 tonnes of deadly methyl isocyanate gas into the air of the central Indian city of Bhopal, quickly killing about 4,000 people. Lingering effects of the poison pushed the death toll to about 15,000 over the next few years, according to government estimates.

In all, at least 500,000 people were affected, the Indian government says. Thirty years later, activists say thousands of children are born with brain damage, missing palates and

twisted limbs because of their parents' exposure to the gas or water contaminated by it.

The disaster remains an open wound in India, where many consider Union Carbide's \$470-million settlement with the Indian government

Ram Pyari said the tragedy haunts her life. "Everything was destroyed," she said Tuesday at a vigil. "And my sons and my daughter-in-law died, my leg was amputated. I have to drag myself. These killers did not heed anything. Why are they not brought to court? Why are they not hanged?"

In the poor neighbourhoods be-

the worst of the tragedy unfolded some 600 kilometres south of New Delhi, survivors and their relatives and supporters burned effigies of Warren Anderson, who headed Union Carbide Corp. at the time of the leak, and a banner emblazoned with the logo of Dow Chemical Co., which bought Union Carbide.

hind the Union Carbide plant, where

Angry protesters spit on the effigies and some young boys urinated on them before they were set on fire.

Anderson died in September in a nursing home in Vero Beach, Fla. Just after the disaster, Anderson travelled to India, where he was arrested. He left the country while free on bail and never returned.

In 2011, the Indian government made a renewed push to extradite Anderson, then 90, from the United States, without success. Prosecutors wanted to try him on culpable-homicide charges. Anderson remained a focus of much of the anger of those who survived the gas leak, a symbol of what they perceive as the lack of accountability of big multinational corporations.

Dow Chemical says it has no liability because it bought Union Carbide more than a decade after the cases had been settled.

NYPD officer cleared in chokehold death

Failure to indict sparks angry protests, while stepfather of victim describes ruling as 'licence to kill a black man'

TOM HAYS AND COLLEEN LONG

NEW YORK-A grand jury cleared a white New York City police officer Wednesday in the videotaped chokehold death of an unarmed black man stopped for selling loose, untaxed cigarettes — a case that sparked outrage and drew comparisons to the deadly police shooting in Ferguson,

The decision not to indict officer Daniel Pantaleo heightened tensions that have simmered in the city since the July 17 death of Eric Garner.

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Times Square with signs reading, "Black lives matter" and "Fellow white people, wake up." In the Staten Island neighbourhood where Garner died, people reacted with angry disbelief and chanted, "I can't breathe!" and "Hands up - don't choke!"

Garner's stepfather, Benjamin Carr, urged calm but said the ruling made no sense. "It's just a licence to kill a black man," he said, calling the justice system "not worth a damn."

In Washington, a Justice Department official said federal authorities would conduct their own investigation into Garner's death.

In his first public comments, Pantaleo said he prays for Garner's family and hopes they accept his condolences. "I became a police officer to help people and to protect those who can't protect themselves," he said in the statement.

"It is never my intention to harm anyone, and I feel very bad about the death of Mr. Garner.

Police union officials and Pantaleo's lawyer argued that the officer used a

takedown move taught by the police department, not a banned manoeuvre, because Garner was resisting arrest. They said his poor health was the main reason he died.

Staten Island district attorney Daniel Donovan said the grand jury found "no reasonable cause" to bring charges. The grand jury could have considered a range of charges, from reckless endangerment to murder.

"I am actually astonished based on the evidence of the videotape, and the medical examiner, that this grand jury at this time wouldn't indict for anything," said Jonathan Moore, a lawyer for Garner's family.

As protests started to gather steam citywide, Mayor Bill de Blasio cancelled an appearance at the annual Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lighting and met with Garner's father and other community leaders. At a Staten Island church, he said, "there's a lot of pain and frustration in the room this evening," but called on protesters to remain peaceful.

A video shot by an onlooker and widely viewed on the Internet showed the 43-year-old Garner telling a group of police officers to leave him alone as they tried to arrest him. Pantaleo responded by wrapping his arm around Garner's neck in what appeared to be a chokehold, which is banned under NYPD policy.

The heavy-set Garner, who had asthma, was heard repeatedly gasping, "I can't breathe!'

A second video surfaced that showed police and paramedics appearing to make no effort to revive Garner while he lay motionless on the ground. He died at a hospital.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angry remarks made by Louis Head, centre, are being investigated as part of an inquiry into the Ferguson riots.

Michael Brown's stepfather apologizes for outburst after grand jury decision

Louis Head says it's unfair to blame him for night of unrest

JIM SALTER

FERGUSON, MO.—The stepfather of Michael Brown has apologized for angry comments he made after the grand jury decided not to indict the police officer who killed his unarmed 18-year-old stepson, but said his remarks had nothing to do with the arson and looting that ravaged Ferguson and the surrounding area.

Police said Tuesday they are investigating Louis Head's comments as part of a broader inquiry into the arson, vandalism and looting that followed the announcement of the grand jury decision on Nov. 24. Brown's death inflamed racial tensions in the Missouri city of Ferguson and fuelled a debate over relations between law enforcement and black communities across the U.S. Head said Wednesday in a state-

ment to CNN that he was full of emotion when he yelled "Burn this bitch down!" in a crowd of protesters. Head does not have a listed phone number, and there was no answer when an Associated Press reporter knocked at his listed address Wednesday. Attorneys for Brown's family did not respond to several messages seeking comment.

Brown, who was black, was shot and killed by Ferguson officer Darren Wilson on Aug. 9. Wilson, who is white, told the grand jury he fired because his life was in danger, but some witnesses said Brown was trying to surrender.

Brown's mother, Lesley McSpadden, was on top of a car on a Ferguson street in front of the police station, surrounded by protesters, when she heard the grand jury announcement. She began sobbing. Her husband jumped on top of the car and hugged her, then yelled out.

The street was already noisy and grew louder as Head hugged his wife. He yelled without a microphone or any amplification. Some people who were close by couldn't hear what he

Still, video of the comments immediately spread on social media.

Head, in a statement to CNN, said, "I was so angry and full of raw emotions, as so many others were, and granted, I screamed out words that I shouldn't have screamed in the heat of the moment."

But Head said to it's unfair to place blame solely on him for the violence that transpired.

Kenya slammed for security failures as deadly attacks continue

Country's military mission in Somalia questioned anew in wake of Al Shabab assaults

JASON STRAZIUSO AND TOM ODULA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NAIROBI, KENYA-When Kenya sent troops to Somalia in 2011 to fight Islamic extremists, the Al Qaedalinked group Al Shabab threatened to retaliate by bringing down Nairobi's skyscrapers.

The buildings still stand, but a series of mass killings in which non-Muslims were singled out for slaughter has increased pressure on Kenya

to improve security along a porous border and explain why its army should remain in Somalia.

Al Shabab quickly claimed responsibility for the latest chilling assault: gunmen invaded a quarry in northern Kenya, lined up 36 non-Muslim labourers and killed them early Tuesday. That followed a similar massacre on Nov. 22, when Al Shabab killed 28 Kenyans on a bus, again sparing the Muslims among the pas-

The group's most notorious attack was on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi last year. At least 67 died in that siege in the capital of the East African nation.

Kenya sent its military forces into Somalia in hopes of creating a secure buffer zone between Somalia's internal chaos and Kenyan territory. But the series of attacks by Al Shabab has left Kenyans demanding change, and President Uhuru Kenyatta responded Tuesday by shaking up the leadership of his security team.

Abdullahi Boru, an independent East Africa security analyst who formerly worked for the International Crisis Group, noted that Kenya "went into Somalia without a clear plan. If we had a plan, we would have anticipated the blowback and ensure

our borders are secured. "We are terrible at this job (of internal security) ... and Al Shabab knows our weak points."

Among those weak points, Boru said, is endemic corruption "across all government agencies" in Kenya, a point that security analysts and citizens agree on. There are many allegations that Al Shabab fighters bribed police to let them cross the Somalia-Kenya border. But because the border is so long and unguarded, that's not even necessary.

Al Shabab once controlled most of Somalia's capital, but has steadily been losing territory to the African Union forces. That makes the group more likely to hit back elsewhere.

Besides creating fear among non-

Muslim residents of northern Kenya who are demanding that authorities ensure their safety, the killings have opened up Kenyatta's government to criticism.

The political opposition group CORD called Tuesday's attack "another senseless slaughter." It blamed "corruption within our security, political, intelligence and military lead-

Although some in Kenya advocate withdrawing its troops from Somalia, Kenyatta said that was not his plan. "We shall continue to inflict painful casualties on these terrorists until we secure our country and region," he said.