

Dear Madam Razan Al Mubarak  
President IUCN

Through this letter we are addressing you on the behalf of people living in Tharparkar district of Sindh province, where several settlements have been badly affected by the coal mining and coal-based power generation being done in Thar Coalfield Block II. These include the village of Gorrano and several of its surrounding settlements.

Your organization had issued a controversial report in 2019 about a water reservoir built in this area which is having serious negative environmental and social impacts. This reservoir is being filled with poisonous and polluted water produced during coal mining in Thar Coalfield Block II. Since this report was produced with the financial support of Sindh Egro Coal Mining (which owns and operates coal mines in Thar Coalfield Block II), you have stated in it that this water is in no way poisonous or polluted and, therefore, does not have any social or environmental impacts. Your report goes on to claim that this water is infact not just highly suitable for breeding fish, it can also provide a sanctuary to local and migratory birds. Your report similarly states that Gorrano has turned into a tourist spot where people living in closeby villages, particularly their children, often come for site seeing and entertainment.

We would not have any problem with this report if it was not so one sided and so much against realities on the ground. On the one hand, you have not included in it the point of view of Gorrano's residents who are being badly affected by this reservoir. On the other hand, you have facilitated SEMC to present this in courts of law in its favor this report claiming that the water it is releasing in Gorrano is not polluted at all because IUCN has certified it to be neat and clean. The company has also presented your report to Pakistani and foreign news media outlets as evidence favoring its stance.

We are shocked and depressed how an organization like IUCN can be so careless about its reputation when its core objective is the protection and preservation of natural environment. The answer to this question can only be found if your controversial report on Gorrano reservoir is evaluated honestly by yourself.

But before you can do that, allow us, the people affected by Gorrano reservoir, to inform you about the situation on the ground. Over the last eight years, our agricultural lands have been devastated and due to constant accumulation of water in the reservoir, ground water level in our area is continuously rising. If this situation continues, this underground water will not just weaken the foundations of homes in Gorrano and its nearby villages, our agricultural land will have so much moisture that it will not support any crops and local trees and vegetation will wilt away too.

We are also living under the constant fear that one day the water accumulating in the reservoir will exceed its capacity, breech its boundary and wash away our homes. You could have also witnessed all these developments if you had taken the trouble of visiting Gorrano even once after preparing your report. If you had done that you would have certainly seen trees, greenery and pastures inundated by polluted water spread over 1,834 acres of land. You would have also found that thousands of local trees, such as Kandi, Jaal, Rohero, Ber and many other precious species, have been singed by the reservoir water. All these trees were lush green before water started accumulating in Gorrano reservoir a few years ago.

Let us also inform you that the residents of 12 local villages had their communal grazing land spread over 2,500 acres of land exactly where the poisonous water emitted by coal mines stands today. Livestock belonging to all these villages used to graze here freely.

Today, Gorrano does not have a grazing land at all. It also does not have cultivable agricultural land. You cannot even imagine how local residents, entirely dependent on livestock and subsistence agriculture, make ends meet these days. Similarly, you would not know that underground water in this area used to be sweet and clean but today it is utterly unusable. Due to the poisonous water emitted from coal mines and accumulated in the reservoir, 26 local wells have gone out of use. Now the reservoir water is polluting well water in six other villages including Dukkar Chau. If nothing is done about this situation, the human population, agricultural land and even livestock in these six villages will be as severely impacted as they already have in Gorrano.

Given this scenario, we strongly believe that it has become extremely important for you to analyze the situation in Gorrano and its nearby villages once again. We also believe that you should not spend just a couple of days here as you did when you compiled your controversial report mentioned above and should instead spend all the required time that such analysis requires.

We also demand that:

1. You issue a thorough clarification in the news media about your earlier report. This clarification must state clearly that the report was prepared without conducting any scientific testing of water samples from Gorrano reservoir and that you spent only two days on the ground to prepare the report.
2. You must also prepare a new report, independently and transparently, which is neither financed by nor supported by SEMC in any other manner. For this purpose, you must not just conduct scientific tests on water and soil samples taken from Gorrano reservoir, you should also include the result of those tests in the new report.
3. During the preparation of this report, we request you to also visit our villages so that you can witness our plight with your own eyes and can listen to and analyze our point of view without any favor or bias.
4. The new report must also evaluate the negative impacts of the poisonous coal mining water being released near Dukkar Chau so that the human population, environment and natural resources of this village can be saved from the destruction that has already befallen Gorrano.

We hope and expect that you will respond to this letter at the earliest and follow up on our demands without wasting any precious time.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Lawyer Leela Ram  
Lakshman  
Khanoo Dohat  
Deedar Bheel  
Sikandar Sangrasi  
Haji Ayub Lodo  
Abdullah Chohan

Gango Kolhi  
Ramesh Bheel  
Seeta wife of Mangal  
Manro wife of Bhallo  
Bachchoo Mehranpoto  
Khamiso Nohrio  
Malho Kolhi