

E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

19 June 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

Thank you for your emails. We are surprised that you claim high ethical standards when you can be in no doubt that development close to the reserve will damage the Jarawa's wellbeing. This tribal people has made it abundantly clear for generations that they do not seek integration with the outside world. The fact that natural curiosity leads some, particularly younger people, to occasional interaction with outsiders does not alter this. The Jarawa remain at extreme risk from contagious diseases against which they have no adequate protection.

The fact that there is encroachment in or close to the reserve elsewhere does not affect the case against your development. Any developments close to the reserve increase the threat to the Jarawa.

We have been reliably informed that Jarawa visit nearby. These visits are not monitored but we are reliably informed that the last visit was made quite recently. The precise date of this visit is not relevant to the concerns we have expressed.

The principal point in your email seems to be the distance between the proposed resort and the edge of the reserve. We have this as 500 metres (which is an approximation); you claim it as 3,200 metres. Even if you were correct, it would still constitute only about a half hour's walk for a fit Jarawa and would be much too close for comfort.

We do not believe that you are correct about the distance, however, for the following reasons:

- 1) Reliable sources have told us that the distance is about 500 metres.
- 2) We have visited the site and had the edge of the reserve pointed out by individuals who have a close knowledge of these matters. Although the distance was not paced out (for obvious reasons), it was estimated to be about 500ms away and certainly much less than 3.2kms.
- 3) You provide a map which claims that the 'nearest point' of the reserve to the resort is indicated by a line which you have drawn. We do not believe that this is in fact the nearest point. The reserve covers the whole of the peninsula to the north of your point and then extends around to the east.
- 4) Even if you were right about the 'nearest point', the reserve includes an area 5kms seaward from the shoreline.

5) Even if this were not the case, we believe that the line on your map represents a distance shorter than 3kms.

If you wish to pursue this, please show us where you believe the reserve's relevant boundaries are and most importantly let us know on what information you base this. Once we have it, and have checked with the relevant authorities, should we find the distance to be materially different from the approximately 500 meters we have cited, we would be happy to issue a correction.

In the meantime, we will not be adjusting our figure and will continue to urge you not to proceed with your project.

We reserve the right to publish this communication and those we have received or receive from you.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry

Director

E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

23 June 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

We have received a number of emails from you over the last few days, one of which ran to 20 pages. We will respond to any points of substance that you may raise, but you should not expect us to do so instantaneously, or to reply at all to the many observations you have made which are irrelevant to the point under discussion.

In the flurry of emails you appear to have lost sight of this point. Allow me to repeat it: any development, yours included, which brings outsiders into close proximity with the reserve or its occupants will inevitably increase the threat to the Jarawa, and should not take place.

You seem to accept that other developments pose risks to the Jarawa, but deny that the same holds true for Barefoot. I do not know why. You say that your resort is not close to the reserve, but even on your own figures this is plainly not the case. No amount of good works performed elsewhere can change this.

Nothing you have said alters our view that Barefoot's proposals pose a significant danger to the Jarawa, which we will continue to oppose.

We do not believe that we have got our facts wrong or have been duped. We have certainly made no covert deals or libellous statements. We have not acted duplicitously or illegally. We reject these and other allegations that you have made in a similar vein and invite you to withdraw them. They will not assist either of us to understand the position of the other.

You claim that your website makes no mention of the Jarawa. In fact it refers to 'mysterious and endangered Palaeolithic tribes'. Remarks of this sort can only excite the curiosity of your visitors, and could have serious repercussions if even a few of them decided to explore further. I would ask you please immediately to remove from the site any reference to local tribes or the reserve.

I would be grateful if you would address any further emails to me rather than to Miriam Ross. There is no need to copy them to my staff.

You may forward to me at director@survival-international.org any email to the trustees, or write to them if you prefer at the address below. Please mark your email or letter 'trustees re Andamans' and I will ensure that it is circulated as appropriate.

I appreciate that I have not responded to many of the points you have made, or to the questions you have asked. This is not because I agree with what you say

but because, as I have already remarked, I do not think that this part of our correspondence will take us anywhere. The colour of your tents (for example) has never been a concern of ours, and I cannot envisage any circumstances which might make it one.

If this correspondence is to continue, let us both try to focus on the only matter in hand: the safety and security of the Jarawa.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry

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E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

25 June 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

Thank you for your email of 24 June. I do not intend to repeat the points I have made already, but would like to explain still further why we feel you should not be pursuing your business interests in this particular place, the location of which is perfectly well known to us.

You say, both in this email and in the one you have written to Mr Jeremy Smith that you believe we should 'be suggesting checks and balances and monitoring' vis-à-vis your resort.

You also say that it poses no threat to the Jarawa 'because it is not inside the reserve'.

I find it difficult to reconcile these two statements. Why should you be interested in Survival suggesting 'checks and balances' if your resort poses no threat to the Jarawa?

One conclusion is surely that you are well aware that it does, or could, pose such a threat, and indeed you admit as much in your email to Mr Smith where you talk of our potentially helping you in the job of, 'eliminating or minimizing potential ill-effects of the resort on the reserve, if any.'

Having said I would avoid repetition, I nevertheless repeat that we will continue vigorously to oppose your development because it poses a severe risk to the Jarawa.

You claim that your tourists have a surprising depth of knowledge about the Andamans and its anthropology and say 'they all seem to have read' a particular website. That website is largely concerned with early humans and their movements and has a good deal on the Andamans. If 'all' your visitors are interested in this topic, as you claim, has it not occurred to you that they might come to your resort in the hope of seeing the 'mysterious' and 'Paleolithic' tribes you talk about in your publicity (a reference you have explicitly denied but which took me less than 30 seconds to find)?

Bringing hundreds of people, however well informed about the Jarawa, to within a short distance from the reserve is dangerous. The fact that they are largely an international clientele who will have stepped off airliners only a few hours previously, and will therefore be carriers of a variety of infectious diseases from all corners of the globe, hugely increases the risk. Even if the shortest distance were the 3.2kms you claim (which we do not accept), it changes nothing.

You will be aware that the authorities believe that a 5kms buffer zone around the reserve is important for protecting the Jarawa. By any calculation your resort lies well within this. Do you not believe that a buffer zone is more than sensible?

Research indicates that about 20% of passengers develop colds or other viral infections within a few days of flights. If you are bringing, say, 600 people to your resort every year (I have no idea of the real number, perhaps you could tell me), from all over the world, then you are responsible for taking, on average, 120 different people carrying contagious viral infections to very near the reserve each year. There is nothing you can do about their state of health, except possibly tell them not to come for at least a week after flights. They will not even know if they are contagious: infection can be asymptomatic in carriers even when it is potentially fatal for a non-immune population.

Even if the world were not facing a flu pandemic, this is appallingly irresponsible. Your clients should quite simply not be there and your resort should be closed.

I am informed that your colleagues in other tourism companies have contributed to websites saying they believe you are acting ethically, and that Survival is at fault. This is very disturbing and indicates to us that more pressure should be brought to bear to change attitudes towards tribal peoples in your industry. We will consider how best this might be achieved.

As we continue vigorously to oppose your project, we will also continue to press for road closure and other developments important to Jarawa welfare, as we have been doing for more than 10 years.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry

E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

2 July 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

Thank you for your email of 29 June.

In the course of our work we often find ourselves having to publicise criticism of both governments and companies (we do not normally do so, incidentally, without contacting them first and asking them to change policy or practice, as we did with you). Many of them ignore our private approaches and then 'retaliate' with all manner of attacks once we have gone public. These do not sway us from our objectives. I would begin by pointing out that we have never, in forty years, been accused of the kinds of things you are now accusing us of, even by the most rapacious mining companies or governments with the least concern for human rights.

Photos and 'paedophilia'

The pictures we use of Jarawa were donated to us; we have not paid for them, nor did we commission them. Our pictures are sensitive, real, and used in an important part of our job, to educate the public about who tribal peoples really are.

Our Jarawa pictures have been published on our website and elsewhere for many years and neither you, nor anyone else, has objected. Your newfound complaint, that our website is 'voyeuristic, deeply offensive, racist and bordering on pornography and promotion of pedophilia', is extremely serious, but also baseless and absurd.

We assume, however, you have launched the same accusation at others who have published similar pictures in recent years, including the Government of India and dozens of prestigious newspapers around the world, including El Mundo, the Telegraph, and the Hindustan Times.

Recording of Jarawa complaint about poaching

Some time ago, a Survival fieldworker was travelling with some government officials and others when the group was approached by a few Jarawa, outside the Reserve. The Jarawa wanted to complain about poacher encroachment and our fieldworker was asked to videotape the incident, specifically to draw attention to this serious problem. She was not the only one present who photographed the event. What is important about this recording is that it allows the Jarawa their own voice on an international stage for the first time.

Risk of contagion

Our job in this case is to draw attention to the threats to the Jarawa. We have been doing this for several years, as have others in the Andamans, and it has had a significant and beneficial impact (I believe that somewhere in your voluminous litany of attacks on us, you actually acknowledge this). We believe, together with most relevant authorities, that there should be no tourists near the Reserve.

You now suggest that our fieldworker, who was there with the sole objective of assisting the Jarawa, coming into contact with some tribespeople by chance, and more than a week after possible airline contagion, is comparable to your bringing tourists (you have not told us how many, although we have asked) to within 5 kms of the Reserve on a regular basis, with the objective of financial profit. If you really believe there was some risk in our visit, why have you not raised this before, and why are you bringing tourists close to the Reserve?

As an aside, it is worth pointing out that our workers are all extensively trained in tribal peoples' issues and well able to assess risk and react appropriately. I assume you would not make the same claim for your clients. I also assume many of your international clients will have travelled on airliners within a week of your bringing them close to the Reserve. If that is so, they will be particularly likely to be carrying pathogens potentially fatal to peoples with low immunity. The swine flu pandemic can only increase the danger that they pose to the Jarawa.

You have published other very serious accusations about Survival: that our materials are, 'defamatory' with 'factual inaccuracies, incorrect assumptions, imputed motives and wild extrapolations'. According to you, we are guilty of, 'falsely sensationalizing'; 'conjecture'; 'not verifying facts'; 'ignoring real threats... such as the Trunk Road'; relying on 'spurious and unsubstantiated hearsay'; 'romanticizing'; 'paying people to 'hunt' Jarawa for photos'; 'peddling the lie of isolation'; 'wilfully putting the Jarawa at... deadly mortal risk'; writing a 'pack of lies' etc. etc.

You also repeatedly make another false accusation which is potentially very damaging: that the authorities have entered into some kind of covert agreement with us. There is no more truth in this than in your other accusations. Survival is an independent organisation which has never made any behind-the-scenes deal with any government authority or company (or anyone else for that matter).

Your numerous and absurd accusations serve no other purpose than to damage Survival International and its work. They are all without foundation and you will be unable to substantiate any of them. It is frankly dismaying that you can

characterise your actions as 'ethical tourism', and even more that you are receiving the backing of a few other self-appointed 'ethical' companies.

You have published your accusations, including the most sordid, on websites and have also published our responses. We have now published them ourselves only to ensure all sides of the story are properly available.

We have accused you of only one thing – bringing tourists very close to the Reserve. You have not denied this, merely stating that it is without risk (although you also suggest it could be).

As you are obviously unswayed by appeal to reason and principles, we will seek other ways of trying to prevent you doing this. If you will not shut your resort, we will, amongst other actions, try to ensure your potential clients are aware of our position. They can make up their own minds; we hope those with ethical principles will stay well away.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry

PS I notice that, following our letters, you have now removed the very pejorative term 'Paleolithic' from your website description of what you still refer to as 'mysterious tribes'.

E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

10 July 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July 2009. Each email you write accuses us of more, different, and usually worse things. You will understand therefore my view that this correspondence is getting out of hand, and I thus propose to confine myself only to some salient points.

We first wrote to you on 20 May. On 23 May you told us that you would respond 'shortly', but three weeks later we had still heard nothing and had not been told when we might expect to do so. We therefore issued our press release on 15 June. I do not accept that you required almost a month to respond to a perfectly straightforward letter.

Our complaint now is not about the questions you have posed (although we regard most of them as irrelevant.) Our complaint, as I thought I had made clear, is about the allegation that our website was 'voyeuristic, deeply offensive, racist and bordering on pornography and promotion of pedophilia'; that we had deliberately resorted to these techniques to raise funds; that it is 'very distasteful' that a 'professed charity' should 'peddle' a trading business on its website; that we deliberately 'peddle the lie of isolation', and that our advertising of a video was 'deeply racist'. I invite you to withdraw these contemptible allegations, but do not expect you to do so.

On the contrary, you now insinuate that I lied when I said that we did not pay for the photographs. You say that we are 'bullies', and that we have broken the laws of India 'with the connivance of rogue elements in the government'. You continue to add to the list of false and offensive allegations that you have already made against us.

For the record:

We will react in a responsible fashion to your complaint about the pictures published on our website. That is to say, we will ignore it.

My observations on the medical risk posed by international travellers were based upon exchanges with experts in the field and were approved by them. I take it that you are 'unaware of the mechanics of the spread of viruses' because, remarkably, you do not seem to have sought your own expert advice. I recommend that you do so as a matter of urgency.

The notion that it is Survival rather than you that has escalated this dispute does not bear scrutiny.

The one thing on which we can perhaps agree is that whatever spurious charges you continue to level against Survival, we will continue to urge potential visitors to your resort to book their holiday elsewhere. Our argument with you, as I have made clear numerous times, is based on the fact that your resort is too close to the Reserve and that it therefore puts the Jarawa in danger, quite unnecessarily.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Corry

PS

Incidentally, we note that you say there are no international flights nowadays into Port Blair. I note, however, that there used to be, and that your company arranged them. Of the four 'international representative offices' you list on your website, two tell us that they have not represented your company for many years. These facts are not relevant to our discussion but, taken together with your false claim that your website did not mention the tribal peoples when in fact it referred to the 'Paleolithic and mysterious' tribes, might be felt to call into question the reliability of your statements and advertising.

E-mail from Stephen Corry, Director, Survival International to Mr Samit Sawhny, Barefoot Resorts

18 August 2009

Dear Mr Sawhny,

There is nothing to be gained by continuing this repetitive correspondence. You believe that Survival is guilty of lying, breaking the law, encouraging paedophilia, cowardice etc; and you are clearly not going to be persuaded about the dangers of your resort.

You have repeatedly challenged attempts made by the responsible authorities to secure a 5 km buffer zone around the reserve. You have done so with no apparent concern about the danger it presents to the Jarawa – notwithstanding your continuous and illogical denials.

You cite Awaradi's 'scientific study' and suggestion of a buffer zone of 500m as justification for your resort's position. However, you must be aware that Awaradi also advocated teaching the Jarawa about agriculture by dropping coconuts packed in fertiliser mud 'a little less than double the size of a football' into the reserve. Awaradi also advocated that the Jarawa be settled in two areas with a surplus economy based on fishing. This is clearly not the sort of advice anyone who cares about the future of the Jarawa should be taking. 500m is not a sensible buffer zone, whereas 5 km does at least give the Jarawa a reasonable buffer from new developments.

You now claim that you do not bring tourists close to the reserve, yet you have repeatedly admitted that you do (we continue to dispute your figure of 3.2 kms although we do not believe it to be material to our case).

For example, a visitor to your resort has reported that your staff told him that he might see Jarawa in the nearby village of Colinpur, but that he should not approach. You cannot of course know whether or not your clients ignore such advice. You cannot enforce your wishes on your clients. Indeed, you admit as much by agreeing that it is a moot point whether or not any Jarawa have interacted with them already. Your website referral to 'Palaeolithic and mysterious tribes', can only have excited tourists' curiosity (otherwise what was the point of mentioning it?) as well as being pejorative of course.

Regarding whether or not Jarawa have used the area of your resort for hunting: it would be irresponsible of us to believe you, a hotelier with a vested commercial interest, over and above a number of responsible sources.

There is no point in our attempting to explain our views about a preferred future of the Jarawa beyond what we have already made clear. In brief, it is entirely up to the Jarawa how much or how little, and when, they interact with outsiders, with

the vital caveat that they are unlikely to realise the potential deadly threat of contagion, particularly from contact with newly arrived, long-distance travellers – precisely the sort of people they are likely to encounter in or near your resort. The fact that they must be protected from this is obvious common sense.

History has shown that tribes who thrive after contact are those whose interaction with the mainstream is minimal, gradual and at their own pace. The development of tourism resorts around their reserve is clearly counter to this.

Your resort is a threat to the Jarawa and should be closed, as should the Andaman Trunk Road and other tourist enterprises close to the reserve.

We have each made our respective positions clear. We are glad to hear that you are open to persuasion but I do not intend to respond to any further correspondence from you unless it contains new relevant information. We will of course continue to pursue our case with vigour.

I urge you once again to do the right thing and close your Colinpur resort.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry