



Campaign to Stop Killer Coke

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Dear Mayor Laura Miller and Council Members John Loza, Donald W. Hill, Dr. Elba Garcia, Ed Oakley, Maxine Thornton-Reese, Steve Salazar, Leo V. Chaney, Jr., James L. Fantroy, Gary Griffith, Bill Blaydes, Lois Finkelman, Sandy Greyson, Mitchell Rasansky and Veletta Forsythe Lill:

Our office recently learned that the Dallas City Council is in the process of contracting with a beverage company and Coca-Cola is one of the bidders. We are appealing to the Mayor and the Dallas City Council to drop Coca-Cola from consideration because of Coke's horrible human rights record.

The International Labor Rights Fund (www.laborrights.org) and the United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, filed a lawsuit against The Coca-Cola Co. and its Colombian bottlers in 2001 on behalf of SINALTRAINAL (National Union of Food Industry Workers), several of its members and the survivors of Isidro Gil, one of its murdered officers. The lawsuit charges that Coca-Cola bottlers "contracted with or otherwise directed paramilitary security forces that utilized extreme violence and murdered, tortured, unlawfully detained or otherwise silenced trade union leaders."

In January 2004, New York City Council Member and former police officer Hiram Monserrate led a delegation on a 10-day, fact-finding tour to Colombia to investigate allegations of human rights violations by Coca-Cola. As one member said upon returning, "We heard one story after another of torture and injustice. The sheer number of these testimonials was overwhelming." The delegation issued a scathing report in April concluding that "Coca-Cola is complicit in human rights abuses of its workers in Colombia" — and its "complicity is deepened by its repeated pattern of bringing criminal charges against union activists who have spoken out about the company's collusion with paramilitaries." (The full report and other supporting information can be read by going to www.killercoke.org and clicking on the Monserrate report and appendices.)

Other serious crimes and abuses Coca-Cola is guilty of include:

- Overexploitation and pollution of water sources in India, Mexico, Ghana and elsewhere
- Benefiting from hazardous child labor in sugar cane fields in El Salvador
- Aggressive marketing to children of nutritionally worthless and damaging products
- History of racial discrimination
- Opposition to environmentally-sound bottle deposit bills
- Anti-worker policies in many foreign countries
- Fraudulent business practices

In recent months, numerous unions, colleges and universities, human rights groups and others have taken strong stands against Coke's abuses. In June, the Service Employees International Union, the largest union in the AFL-CIO, and UNISON, the largest union in Great Britain, passed resolutions calling for a boycott of all Coca-Cola products until human rights abuses in Colombia's bottling plants are resolved. This follows strong support and actions by other unions and labor councils throughout the world. In the past couple of weeks, the American Federation of Teachers, the Communications Workers of America, the American Postal Workers Union and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement have passed resolutions calling for boycotts and other actions against Coca-Cola.

Seven colleges and universities have terminated vendor and pouring contracts leading to the removal of Coke machines and all Coke products from the campuses. In April, one of the largest food coops in the U.S., the Park Slope Food Coop in Brooklyn, New York, with 10,800 members, voted to remove all Coke products from its shelves. Several pubs and restaurants have taken similar action. In addition, human rights organizations such as Veterans for Peace, SOAWatch, Witnesses for Peace and the India Resource Center have condemned and continue to organize against Coca-Cola's human rights abuses in Colombia and throughout the world.

As Sally Shaw, a member of the Gill-Montague Regional Schools district board wrote after rejecting a seven-year contract with Coca-Cola: "I stand by my vote... Only when public officials begin standing up and acting on conscience, will the abuses of the multinational corporations and the politicians who benefit from them be challenged... It is an honor to be the first school district to turn down a contract with KillerCoke."

In light of this horrific record of abuse, no city government should lend its name and credibility to Coca-Cola, nor should it serve as a marketplace or venue for Coke's advertising. We hope that the Dallas City Council will take appropriate action and send the strongest possible message to the Coca-Cola System that The Coca-Cola Co. and its bottlers must act as responsible corporate citizens before they can do business with the city.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ray Rogers
Director
Campaign to Stop Killer Coke
Corporate Campaign, Inc.