

# Is Coca-Cola Collaborating With Terrorists to Commit Murder???

In the midst of the “war on terror,” U.S. companies in Colombia are literally getting away with murder. The largest and most brutal paramilitary organization in Colombia, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), was designated a “terrorist organization” by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. This means that any person providing financial or material support to the AUC is in violation of U.S. law, 18 U.S.C. § 2339B. This has not stopped Coca-Cola bottler Pan American Beverages (Panamco) or Alabama based Drummond Company, Inc, which operates a large coal mine in Colombia, from providing support to the AUC, which then murders and tortures trade union leaders seeking to represent workers at the companies’ facilities in Colombia. These two cases are just a representative sample. Many multinationals operating in Colombia have a similar relationship with the AUC. Indeed, after revenue from drug smuggling, the largest support for the AUC comes from U.S. and other multinationals.

The International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) and the United Steel Workers of America union (USWA) have brought lawsuits under the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) against Coca-Cola and Drummond seeking to stop the corporate complicity with the terrorist AUC. In both cases, the courts have also acknowledged links between the Colombian State and paramilitary groups, as it is common knowledge that paramilitaries exist at the pleasure of the government. [www.laborrights.org/](http://www.laborrights.org/)

It remains to be seen whether the Bush Administration views all terrorists equally, especially if they are in the employ of U.S. companies. It would be a tragic mistake in the court of public opinion if the President fails to enforce the anti-terrorism law in cases where the victims are Colombians, and the terrorists are on the payroll of U.S. companies. This would confirm what the world already suspects – the Bush Administration only cares about U.S. victims of terrorist attacks, and will turn a blind eye to corporate support for a campaign of terror directed against trade union leaders in Colombia, which, regardless of politics, violates 18 U.S.C. § 2339B.

## **COKE CAN'T HIDE ITS CRIMES IN COLOMBIA**

Isidro Segundo Gil, an employee at a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Colombia, was killed at his workplace by paramilitary thugs. His children, now living in hiding with relatives, understand all too well why their homeland is known as "a country where union work is like carrying a tombstone on your back."

Minutes after the thugs showed up at the Carepa plant gate, they fired 10 shots at Gil, a member of the union executive board, mortally wounding him. An hour later, another union leader was kidnapped at his home. That evening, a building that housed the union's offices, equipment and records was set ablaze.

The next day, a heavily armed group returned to the plant, called the workers together and told them if they didn't quit the union by 4 p.m., they, too, would be killed. Resignation forms were prepared in advance by Coca-Cola's plant manager, who had a history of socializing with the paramilitaries and had earlier "given (them) an order to carry out the task of destroying the union," the lawsuit says.

(over....>>

## **Tim Hortons/Wendy's**

On your website you say the following: "Tim Hortons is a part of people's lives and lifestyles. And your feedback means a lot to us!" I am concern about your dealings with a corporation (Coca-Cola) that is operating in Colombia, that provided support to the terrorist, paramilitary organization the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) in carrying out international human rights violations including (murder) against trade unionist. I am asking you as a customer to write to Coca-Cola board of directors and Cc: to ODLC, 475 North Service Rd. East, Oakville, Ontario, L6H 1A5, to comply with the following conditions.

- 1. Issue Public Statement Denouncing Violence.** Confirm with a public statement issued and published in Colombia and the company's home country that the violence against trade union leaders must stop, and that the AUC and other terrorist organizations are not acting in the interests of business when they target trade union leaders for violence. The statement must indicate that such violence, regardless of who commits it, is bad for business and investment.
- 2. Institute Policy Against Collaboration with Terrorists.** Issue a clear policy directive that any employee, agent, or contractor for the company that maintains any contact with or offers encouragement to the AUC or other terrorist groups will be terminated immediately. Further, the company must investigate past links between local Colombian management and the paramilitaries, and remove management with such links. This investigation must be subject to independent review. The company must also conduct training with all management personnel and employees in which they strongly stress the policy that any collusion with armed actors or any encouragement of anti-union violence by these actors, whether material or moral, will not be tolerated and will result in immediate discharge.
- 3. Establish Human Rights Ombudsman.** The company must designate a human rights ombudsman at each Colombian plant to whom employees can go with complaints about anti-union violence and intimidation at or around the facility and who will work with employees and the union to address such concerns in a productive way.
- 4. Provide Compensation for Victims.** The company must create a fund to assist victims of violence by the AUC and other terrorist groups. The fund must provide fair compensation, subject to independent review, for employees and their families who suffered violence from the AUC or other terrorist groups. The support shall be provided without regard to the company's position on whether it is legally liable for such violence.

**Please fill out your name, full address and mail or fax to Tim Hortons:**

**Tim Hortons Head Office**

874 Sinclair Road  
Oakville, ON L6K 2Y1  
Tel: (905) 845-6511  
Fax: (905) 845-0265

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Province:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_