

SINDICATO NACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES DE LA INDUSTRIA DE ALIMENTOS
SINALTRAINAL

Personeria Juridica 04185

Del 7 de Marzo/ 83

NIT. 860.517.322-7

Diario Oficial No. 36207 Del 9 de Diciembre / 82

Bogota D.C., May 15, 2006

McMaster Campus
Canada

To Whom It May Concern:

Greetings,

We have received, with deep concern, the news of the University of Michigan's decision to reestablish its contracts with Coca-Cola, despite the following:

1. The policies of Coca-Cola's bottling plants in Colombia continue to violate the human rights of workers and of those who form part of SINALTRAINAL.
2. We continue to be victims of persecution, threats, legal/court procedures, and the suspension of privileges in order to fire leaders of SINALTRAINAL; we have been pressured to prevent freedom of expression where Coca-Cola's strategy to suppress has become even stronger while looking to legitimize itself through allies and negotiations.
3. The strategy of Coca-Cola is to prolong its contracts with its clients by gaining allies who lie, confuse, discourage and who give the impression that they respect human rights while the abuses remain in impunity.
4. As part of Coca-Cola's strategy to avoid the expectations and pressure of the international campaign, it has sought out the United Nations, and thus the International Labor Organization, in order to prevent the termination of its contracts, in order to neutralize protests and the solidarity of students and organizations around the world, by making believe that there will be an institutional investigation.
5. An investigation conducted by the International Labor Organization is neither viable nor impartial because it consists of representatives of transnational corporations, governments, and the remaining third, of workers led by employer sectors.
6. The IUF does not have the representation of members of SINALTRAINAL and the victims have not authorized the IUF to present their cases concerning Coca-Cola to the ILO. The IUF, who is an ally of Coca-Cola and has declared itself against the international campaign and against SINALTRAINAL, supplants the voice and rights of victims.

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7. The IUFs solicitation of an investigation cannot be attributed to the cases of SINALTRAINAL victims. A more concerning possibility is that the IUF even supports impunity since Coca-Cola has not wanted to investigate information related to the U.S. lawsuit/court, nor to investigate past cases. Furthermore, the company in Colombia gathered its workers in January and frightened them by prohibiting them to give testimony to the investigation.

8. An investigation conducted by the ILO is not appropriate since this organization has already been to Colombia on several occasions and has confirmed that human rights violations exist including the cases denounced by the CUT (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores) and by SINALTRAINAL. Contradictorily, the ILO has refused for many years to delegate an office specifically for Colombia, limiting itself to more recommendations to the Colombian government.

9. It is unreasonable that the United Nations accept that Coca-Cola adopts the GLOBAL COMPACT without taking into consideration the cases pending in the U.S. federal court and the fact that Coca-Cola is being questioned about human rights violations in Colombia and in other countries. This contributes to the overall strategy of neutralizing the international campaign and having the abuses of Coca-Cola remain in impunity and is being used as a mechanism to confuse the international community and to win the support of workers and the general population, in order to sustain the Coca-Cola's policies which the company claims are based on so-called social responsibility.

10. We will continue to insist that the products of companies such as Coca-Cola; products of companies that violate the human rights of workers and the general population, are not consumed, basing this decision on ethical principles and on human morality, until the company adopts a policy that respects human rights and until there is truth, justice and reparation as was proposed in January 2003.

11. Coca-Cola is searching for allies such as the IUF; allies who claim that our grievances are false; thus supporting the company without considering that the IUF is not the one that is affected by the violent acts because they were not the workers of the bottling plants at that time, or because they were not present in the places where the aggressions took place or simply because those unions or the actual IUF does not have or did not have workers affiliated to Coca-Cola.

12. SINALTRAINAL is not opposed to an investigation regarding the behavior of Coca-Cola in Colombia; to the contrary, that has been our intention all along and we have therefore been inviting the world for many years to bring people and organizations to come and receive testimonies of the victims and to verify the procedures of the company; and we will continue showing proof of what has been occurring.

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13. We believe that an impartial investigation cannot include persons or institutions that are affiliated with Coca-Cola and who are involved in, or share the same policies, ideologies or economic interests of governments or companies and of those who are predisposed to oppose SINALTRAINAL.

14. There are prestigious, international organizations such as Human Rights Watch or the “Movimiento de Madres de la Plaza de Mayo” of Argentina who are capable of conducting and impartial investigation while always respecting the rights of victims.

15. Any investigation should include, as a basis of proof, the declarations of the Audiencia Publica Popular Hector Daniel Useche Beron, Contra la Impunidad SINALTRAINAL Clama Justicia, la Audiencia del Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos capitulo Colombia, el Foro Social Mundial and investigations conducted by other organizations and people, including the reports of those delegations that have visited Colombia as well as the rulings of Colombian courts that have condemned Coca-Cola’s bottling plants.

16. The crimes that we, the workers of Coca-Cola who are affiliated with SINALTRAINAL, have been victims of, are serious crimes that cannot be manipulated or simply reduced to specific topics. In dealing with the ILO, a framework of state terrorism and international courts should be included.

17. The attitude of the IUF is most antidemocratic and illegitimate, not only because the IUF has allied itself with Coca-Cola but also because their decision regarding the ILO investigation was not approved by affiliated unions and their members, rather it was a decision made by managers looking to manipulate public opinion and who only have their own personal interests in mind and who do not share the pain and suffering of the victims of the abuses of Coca-Cola.

Sincerely,

Javier Correa
National President of SINALTRAINAL