Worst Companies for Union Organizing Highlighted for International Human Rights Day

As human rights advocates around the world celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) has released “Working for Scrooge: 5 Worst Companies for the Right to Associate” – a list of the five worst multinational corporations for union organizing. Among other rights related to workers, the UDHR states that “everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests” (Article 23, Section 4). The US-based companies on ILRF’s list use intimidation and even violence to violate their workers’ internationally recognized right to organize.

Despite the labor rights protections in the UDHR, UN and ILO declarations and national labor laws, workers continue to see their rights trampled on a daily basis. In fact, in its recently released survey of violations of trade union rights, the International Trade Union Confederation reports at least 91 unionists were killed globally as a result of their organizing efforts in 2007.

The companies on this year’s list include: Nestlé (with violations in the Philippines, Colombia, Peru, Russia and Pakistan), Dole (with violations in the Philippines, Costa Rica and Colombia), Del Monte (with violations in Guatemala and the Philippines), Russell (which is owned by Fruit of the Loom and has violated worker rights in Honduras and Uzbekistan) and Wal-Mart (with violations in the United States and Canada and elsewhere).

Bama Athreya, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Forum, said, “As we commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, consumers and labor rights advocates globally can support the human rights of workers by letting these companies know that they need to respect the right to organize.”

The list of companies is part of ILRF’s End Violence Against Trade Unions campaign. The list along with company profiles can be viewed online here: http://www.laborrights.org/end-violence-against-trade-unions/resources/1871

The International Labor Rights Forum is a non-profit organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers globally. More information can be found online at www.LaborRights.org.

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