



International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
Unión internacional de trabajadores de la alimentación, agrícolas, hoteles, restaurantes, tabaco y afines
Union internationale des travailleurs de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture, de l'hôtellerie-restauration, du tabac et des branches connexes
Internationale Union der Lebensmittel-, Landwirtschafts-, Hotel-, Restaurant-, Café-, und Genussmittelarbeiter-Gewerkschaften
Internationella unionen för livsmedels-, njutningsmedels- och lantarbetareförbund samt förbund inom hotell- och restaurangbranschen

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sl/ba/mk/0158

Geneva, December 6, 2018

Subject: Coca-Cola's sponsorship of the International LGBTQ Leaders Conference

Dear Mr. Tedstrom,

The IUF is an international federation of trade unions representing workers employed in agriculture and plantations; the preparation and manufacture of food and beverages; hotels, restaurants and catering services; and all stages of tobacco processing. It is composed of 418 affiliated trade unions in 128 countries representing over 10 million workers. IUF-affiliated unions including RWDSU-UFWC in the USA represent Coca-Cola workers in a variety of activities throughout the global Coca-Cola system.

The IUF LGBTI Workers and Allies Steering Committee¹ wishes to bring to the attention of the International LGBTQ Leaders Conference concerns about the on-going human rights abuses by one of your sponsors, The Coca-Cola Company. Coke is a serial offender in Haiti, Indonesia, Ireland, the Philippines and the United States, where the company is failing to respect the human rights of workers and acting to remedy abuses. The right of all workers to form, join and be represented by a union for collective bargaining is an internationally recognized fundamental human right.

Coca-Cola invests resources in advertising and sponsorships to promote the image of a company respecting LGBTQ rights, but the stark contrast between the image it promotes and the lack of respect it shows for the human rights of its work force in many countries could not be greater.

In Indonesia Coca-Cola bottler Amatil pursues its long running attack on the rights of independent, democratic trade unions ([for more read here](#)).

In Haiti its bottler La Brasserie de la Couronne continues to systematically deny workers their right to form and be represented by a union ([read more here](#)).

In the Philippines major Coca-Cola bottler FEMSA is violating fundamental rights while it brutally destroys employment. Mass layoffs with little explanation or justification have been accompanied by a refusal to engage in meaningful collective bargaining with the Federation of Coca-Cola Unions (FCCU) that represents a majority of Coca-Cola workers in that country ([see more information here](#)).

¹ The IUF LGBTI Workers and Allies Steering Committee was constituted from the IUF LGBTI Workers Conference participants. The first ever IUF international LGBTI Workers Conference took place on August 27, 2017 with over 70 participants in conjunction with the IUF's 27th Congress.

In the USA the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Northern New England hired an expensive consultancy firm that publicly states "We represented management at employee meetings with the objective of persuading subject group of employees at Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Northern New England in Greenfield, Massachusetts to remain union-free".

While it has been repeatedly informed of these ongoing rights violations by the IUF, The Coca-Cola Company has failed to take any meaningful action to remedy the abuses. Coke's systematic human rights due diligence failure make it complicit in these abuses, and a rights abuser in its own right.

Abuses are not limited to the bottling system. In Ireland, The Coca-Cola Company had earlier closed its directly owned, strongly unionized concentrate plant (where the "secret formula" syrup is manufactured) in Drogheda and has recently announced the closure of a second union plant in Athy while refusing to engage with the union at the remaining concentrate plant in Ballina, where a large number of production workers want to be represented by the IUF-affiliated SIPTU.

The Coca-Cola Company's recently published human rights report evades the Company's real-world responsibilities when it comes to ensuring respect for rights on the part of its bottlers – who employ the vast majority of the women and men around the world who manufacture Coke-branded products. To learn more about what's wrong with The Coca-Cola Company's Human Rights Report [click here](#).

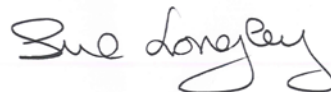
The IUF believes that The Coca-Cola Company's human rights hypocrisy raises serious questions about its sponsorship of International LGBTQ Leaders Conference. The IUF LGBTI Workers and Allies Steering Committee therefore respectfully requests the Victory Institute as the conference organizer to raise these repeated abuses with The Coca-Cola Company and insist the company act to remedy the growing number of human rights violations within the Coca-Cola system.

We are happy to provide further details should you require them. Please direct any questions to burcu.ayan@iuf.org.

Sincerely yours,



Michele Kessler
Acting Chair of the IUF LGBTI
Workers and Allies Committee



Sue Longley
IUF General Secretary

Cc: Stuart Appelbaum, RWDSU-UFCW President, sappelbaum@rwdsu.org