

Ministry of Labor  
Comayaguela, Honduras  
via fax: 011 504 222 3220

January 22, 2006

Dear Labor Minister,

We are deeply concerned about the firing of more than 1,200 unionized workers since December at three banana plantations producing for Chiquita Brands International. These dismissals are a clear attempt to destroy Sitratzurco, Sitrateroo, and other unions affiliated with COSIBAH (Coordinadora de Sindicatos Bananeros y Agroindustriales de Honduras, or Coordinating Body of Banana and Agro-Industrial Unions).

The company is also threatening and sanctioning union leaders such as **Gustavo Castro**, the president of Sitraameribi, to try to convince them to resign from their positions, and leave the unions weak and in collapse.

When Chiquita went before the Labor Ministry recently, it refused to provide a solution to the unjust dismissals of these workers. So workers met and more than 200 decided to go on strike as long as the company continues the union persecution, the firings, and the violations of the collective bargaining agreement. The company has threatened to close the farms completely if the workers follow through with the strike.

We therefore urge the Ministry of Labor, as the institution responsible for investigating compliance with Honduran labor law and effectively addressing violations of workers' rights, to take immediate action to:

- ensure that Chiquita brings an end to its practices of repression and persecution of the Honduran banana unions;
- drop the sanctions imposed on Gustavo Castro and other union leaders;
- cease unjust dismissals of unionized and non-unionized workers.

For Peace with Justice,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

cc: Chiquita Brands International ~ via fax: 1-513-784-8030  
Office of the President of Honduras ~ via fax: 011 504 221 4552  
Ambassador Norman García Paz ~ via fax: 1 202 966 9751  
Ambassador Charles A. Ford ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037  
Marcos Mandojana, Desk Officer for Honduras, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597  
Honduras Mission to the United Nations ~ via fax: 212-223-0498  
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email  
U.S. Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

International Labor Rights Fund/Honduras

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**