

COLOMBIA

More threats against Coca-Cola union leaders

IRTF's RRN has faxed letters on at least 14 occasions to Colombian officials since 2002 on behalf of the food and beverage workers belonging to the **National Union of Food Industry Workers** (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos, SINALTRAINAL*). In 2008, RRN faxed two letters in response to recent threats, described below.

The workers have repeatedly tried to organize in Nestle and Coca-Cola plants. Workers of Panamco, a Coca-Cola subsidiary, have documentation of union members or leaders being murdered (at least 8), kidnapped, and tortured by paramilitary groups, under the direction of plant management. These abuses against SINALTRAINAL members are a central focus of the ongoing Coke-boycott movement on college campuses across the US.

Coca-Cola: *Abuses in Colombia*

Recent Threats

February 12, 2008: **José Domingo Flórez** received a letter containing death threats signed by the paramilitary group the Black Eagles Front at his home in Bucaramanga, Santander Department. The letter accused trade unionists of being terrorists and told them that because they had not obeyed a previous paramilitary order to leave the city, they would now have to bear the cruel "consequences," starting with their families. The threat said that other SINALTRAINAL leaders **Javier Correa**, **Domingo Flórez** and **Luis García** were also under surveillance by the paramilitary group.

February 13, 2008: Another letter, threatening his daughter, gave **José Domingo Flórez** a deadline of eight days to leave the area.

June 11, 2008: a man handed an 11-year boy a death threat for his father, **Cesar Tamayo**, president of the peasant farmers' trade union Agrarian Association of Santander Department. Also named in the death threat were:

- **Cesar Plazas**, **David Florez**, **Nohora Villamizar**, and **Fernando Porras**, all members of the Santander branch of the Trade Union Congress (*Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*);
- **Javier Correa**, member of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (*SINALTRAINAL*);
- **Martha Cecilia Díaz**, president of the Public Services Workers' Union of Santander (*Asociación Santandereana de Servidores Públicos*);
- **William Rivera**, **Gustavo Mendoza**, and **Carolina Rubio**, all members of the non-governmental human rights organization Committee of Solidarity for Political Prisoners (*Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos*).

The note, signed by the Black Eagles, had a cross beside each name, declared them to be military targets, accused them of being guerrillas and of promoting anti-patriotic marches. It also read, "A Colombia free of guerrillas, YES! NGOs, defenders of narco-guerrillas, NO! RIP!"