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# Lawsuit Filed Against Occidental Petroleum for Involvement in Colombian Massacre

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(Los Angeles, CA)-- On April 24, 2003, a group of international human rights attorneys shall be bringing suit under the Alien Tort Claims Act against Occidental Petroleum (OXY) and its security contractor, Airscan, Inc., for their role in the murder of innocent civilians in the hamlet of Santo Domingo, Colombia on December 13, 1998. The suit is being filed by International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) and the Center for Human Rights at the Northwestern University School of Law.

The lawsuit, which will be filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, centers around the aerial assault on the small town of Santo Domingo which led to the deaths of 19 civilians, including the mother, sister and cousin of the Plaintiff in the lawsuit, Luis Alberto Galvis Mujica. "This case builds upon the success we have had in using the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) to address egregious human rights violations committed by U.S. companies in their overseas operations," said Terry Collingsworth, ILRF's Executive Director. "The ILRF has made it a priority to focus on human rights violations in Colombia, and based on recent decisions in cases brought against Coca-Cola and Drummond Coal, we are confident that our case against OXY will go forward. Companies should not be profiting from murder. This case is the first of several we envision against OXY for its ongoing and willful participation in murder and other human rights violations in Colombia."

On December 13, 1998, the Colombian Air Force ("CAF") -- an official branch of the Colombian military receiving direct funding from Occidental in return for protecting Occidental's pipeline in Cano Limón -- dropped U.S.-made cluster bombs upon Santo Domingo. The CAF, carrying out this raid in U.S.-made Blackhawk helicopters, received the coordinates for this bombing directly from Defendant AirScan, Inc., which was working in its capacity as a security contractor and agent of Defendant Occidental. AirScan, through three of its U.S.-born employees who were flying a Skymaster plane at the time -- the Skymaster plane having been provided directly by Occidental -- provided aerial surveillance for this mission during the bombing, helped the CAF identify the target for bombing and chose the places for Colombian military troop disembarkment during the mission. Accompanying the three Airscan pilots in the Skymaster plane during the bombing raid was a Colombian military officer who at the time served as air force liaison to Occidental. This bombing, moreover, was planned by the CAF and AirScan in Occidental's complex in Cano Limón, Colombia.

The U.S. State Department was so concerned about the obvious violation of human rights committed by the CAF by its bombing of Santo Domingo, Colombia that it recently decided to cut off funding to the CAF unit responsible for this raid. At the same time, however, the U.S. continues to provide unprecedented levels of funding to the Colombian military which continues to carry out similar human rights abuses. In addition, notwithstanding Occidental's responsibility for the massacre in Santo Domingo, the U.S. has specifically given \$125 million to the Colombian military to protect Occidental's oil pipeline—an

unprecedented \$3 a barrel subsidy-- and has sent U.S. special forces to train the Colombian troops in protecting this pipeline. Occidental was a major proponent of Plan Colombia -- the plan under which the U.S. provided its 1.3 billion dollar installment to the Colombian military in 2000 -- and remains a major beneficiary of this Plan.

Organizations like Amazon Watch, Global Exchange, and the Colombia Support Network have been drawing attention to OXY's controversial Colombian operations for years. The company was besieged by international protest for their relentless attempts to drill for oil on ancestral territory of the U'wa people. OXY came under fire in 2001 when the company called on the military and riot police to break up a non-violent road blockade of the road leading to OXY's drill site. Three indigenous children died in the attack and scores were seriously injured. "The evidence in this lawsuit validates what human rights and environmental groups have been saying all along—that OXY is a morally bankrupt company that values drilling rights at the expense of human rights. U.S. taxpayers should not be footing the bill for such a lawless corporation," said Kevin Koenig of Amazon Watch.

Jack Laun, of the Colombia Support Network, has stated, "Occidental Petroleum has been a major supporter of the military focus in Plan Colombia, which has promoted conflict and resulted in increased killings and displacement of peasant and indigenous families in the Colombian countryside."

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