

"Most Wanted" Corporate Human Rights Violators of 2005

By [Global Exchange](#)

INTRODUCTION

Corporations carry out some of the most horrific human rights abuses of modern times, but it is increasingly difficult to hold them to account. Economic globalization and the rise of transnational corporate power have created a favorable climate for corporate human rights abusers, which are governed principally by the codes of supply and demand and show genuine loyalty only to their stockholders.

Though it isn't easy, we can check the power of corporations—and citizens around the world are stepping up to do it. Global Exchange developed this list of some of the world's worst corporate abusers to illustrate that on issues as diverse as assassination, torture, kidnapping, environmental degradation, abusing public funds, violently repressing political rights, releasing toxins into pristine environments, destroying homes, discrimination, and causing widespread health problems, familiar companies like Dow Chemical, Coca Cola, Caterpillar, Lockheed, Philip Morris, and Wal-Mart play a big role. Now we need you to take action!

Several of the companies below are being sued under the Alien Tort Claims Act, a law that allows citizens of any nationality to sue in US federal courts for violations of international rights or treaties. When corporations act like criminals, we have the right and the power to stop them, holding leaders and multinational corporations alike to the accords they have signed. Around the world—in Venezuela, Argentina, India, and right here in the United States—citizens are stepping up to create democracy and hold corporations accountable to international law.

This list of "MOST WANTED" corporate criminals gives you information about the abusive behavior of this year's top fourteen worst corporations, tells you who is responsible, and how to connect with and support people who are doing something about it. The more you know, the less these corporations can continue their abuses out of public eyesight: so share this information with your friends, get on the phone with the CEOs themselves, and exercise your rights as a citizen and consumer today.

CATERPILLAR

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Human Rights Abuses: contracting with known violators of human rights, enabling house demolition, supplying equipment that kills Palestinian civilians and American peace activists

For years, the Caterpillar Company has provided Israel with the bulldozers used to destroy Palestinian homes. Despite worldwide condemnation, Caterpillar has refused to end their corporate participation house demolition by cutting off sales of specially modified D9 and D10 bulldozers to the Israeli military.

Israel seeks to portray the destruction of homes as necessary to its self-defense, but nothing could be further from the truth. As the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions has rigorously documented, house destruction is part of Israel's intention to turn the annexation of East Jerusalem and other occupied areas into a concrete fact (<http://www.icahd.org/eng/>).

In a letter to Caterpillar CEO James Owens The Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights said: "allowing the delivery of your. . . bulldozers to the Israeli army. . . in the certain knowledge that they are being used for such action, might involve complicity or acceptance on the part of your company to actual and potential violations of human rights..."

Peace activist Rachel Corrie was killed by a Caterpillar, D-9, military bulldozer in 2003. She was run over while attempting to block the destruction a family's home in Gaza. Her family filed suit against Caterpillar in March 2005 charging that Caterpillar knowingly sold machines used to violate human rights. Since Rachel's death at least three more Palestinians have been killed in their homes by Israeli bulldozer demolitions.

Who's working on it:

- [Amnesty International](#)
- [Jewish Voice for Peace](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation](#)

CHEVRON

Chairman and CEO: David O'Reilly
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Human Rights Abuses: environmental destruction, health violations, and violent killings

The petrochemical company Chevron is guilty of some of the worst environmental and human rights abuses in the world. From 1964 to 1992, Texaco (which transferred operations to Chevron after being bought out in 2001) unleashed a toxic "Rainforest Chernobyl" in Ecuador by leaving more than 600 unlined oil pits in pristine northern Amazon rainforest and dumping 18 billion gallons of toxic production water into rivers used for bathing water. The toxic crude oil and formation water seeped into the subsoil, contaminating surrounding freshwater and farmland. As a result, local communities have suffered severe health effects, including cancer, skin lesions, birth defects, and spontaneous abortions. Indigenous communities have been dispossessed of their lands, and millions of hectares of rainforest have been destroyed to make way for the company's pipelines and oil wells.

Chevron is also responsible for the violent repression of nonviolent opposition to oil extraction. In Nigeria, Chevron has collaborated with the Nigerian police and military who have opened fire on peaceful protestors who oppose oil extraction in the Niger Delta. In 1998, two indigenous Ilaje activists were killed by Nigerian military officers flown in by the company while protesting at an oil platform in Ondo state. In 1999, two people from Opia village were killed by military personnel paid by Chevron, after soliciting a meeting to complain about the company's harmful effects on local fishing. And in 2005, Nigerian soldiers fired upon protestors at Escravos oil terminal, leaving one protestor dead.

Additionally Chevron is responsible for widespread health problems in Richmond, California, where one of Chevron's largest refineries is located. Processing 350,000 barrels of oil a day, the Richmond refinery produces oil flares and toxic waste in the Richmond area. As a result, local residents suffer from high rates of lupus, skin rashes, rheumatic fever, liver problems, kidney problems, tumors, cancer, asthma, and eye problems.

In December 2004, the Unocal Corporation, which recently became a subsidiary of Chevron, settled a lawsuit filed by 15 Burmese villagers, in which the villagers alleged Unocal's complicity in a range of human rights violations in Burma, including rape, summary execution, torture, forced labor and forced migration. Despite the settlement, human rights abuses continue along the oil pipeline in Burma, which is still "secured" by the Burmese military. Chevron is responsible for the risks associated with this pipeline.

Who's working on it:

- [Acción Ecológica](#)
- [Amazon Watch](#)
- [Amazon Defense Front](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [Center for Constitutional Rights](#)
- [EarthRights International](#)
- [Human Rights Watch](#)
- [Oil Change International](#)
- [Oil Watch International](#)
- [Richmond Greens](#)

COCA-COLA

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Human Rights Abuses: violent killings, kidnap and torture, water privatization, health violations, and discriminatory practices

Coca-Cola Company is perhaps the most widely recognized corporate symbol on the planet. The company also leads in the abuse of workers' rights, assassinations, water privatization, and worker discrimination. Between 1989 and 2002, eight union leaders from Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia were killed after protesting the company's labor practices. Hundreds of other Coca-Cola workers who have joined or considered joining the Colombian union SINALTRAINAL have been kidnapped, tortured, and detained by paramilitaries who intimidate workers to prevent them from unionizing. In Turkey, 14 Coca-Cola truck drivers and their families were beaten severely by Turkish police hired by the company, while protesting a layoff of 1,000 workers from a local bottling plant in 2005.

In India, Coca-Cola destroys local agriculture by privatizing the country's water resources. In Plachimada, Kerala, Coca-Cola extracted 1.5 million liters of deep well water, which they bottled and sold under the names Dasani and BonAqua. The groundwater was severely depleted,

affecting thousands of communities with water shortages and destroying agricultural activity. As a result, the remaining water became contaminated with high chloride and bacteria levels, leading to scabs, eye problems, and stomach aches in the local population. Water shortages have occurred in Varanasi, Thane, and Tamil Nadu as well. The company is also guilty of reselling its plants' industrial waste to farmers as fertilizers, despite its containing hazardous lead and cadmium.

Coca-Cola is one of the most discriminatory employers in the world. In the year 2000, 2,000 African-American employees in the U.S. sued the company for race-based disparities in pay and promotions. In México, Coca-Cola FEMSA, the largest Coca-Cola bottler in Latin America, fired a senior bottling manager for being gay. Finally, by regularly denying health insurance to employees and their families, Coca Cola has failed to help stop the spread of AIDS in Africa. The company is one of the continent's largest private employers, yet only partially covers expensive medicines, while not covering generic medicines at all.

Who's working on it:

- [Coke Watch](#)
- [Corp Watch](#)
- [India Resource Center](#)
- [Killer Coke](#)
- [Polaris Institute](#)
- [Public Citizen](#)
- [Students Against Sweatshops](#)
- [USLEAP](#)

DOW CHEMICAL

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Human rights abuses: creation of chemical weapons, marketing poisonous chemicals, illegal dumping of toxins into populated areas, environmental destruction, health problems, death

Dow Chemical has been destroying lives and poisoning the planet for decades. The company is best known for the ravages and health disaster for millions of Vietnamese and U.S. Veterans caused by its lethal Vietnam War defoliant, Agent Orange. Dow's "invent first, ask questions later" standard of business led the multinational company to develop and perfect Napalm, a brutal chemical weapon that burned many innocents to death in Vietnam and other wars. In 1988, Dow provided pesticides to Saddam Hussein despite warnings that they could be used to produce chemical weapons.

In 2001, Dow inherited the toxic legacy of the worst peacetime chemical disaster in history when it acquired Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) and its outstanding liabilities in Bhopal, India. As the Students for Bhopal website recounts, "On December 3rd, 1984, thousands of people in Bhopal, India were gassed to death after a catastrophic chemical leak at a UCC pesticide plant. More than 150,000 people were left severely disabled-of whom 22,000 have since died of their injuries-in a disaster now widely acknowledged as the world's worst ever."

Dow refuses to address its liabilities in Bhopal or even admit its existence, continuing in Union Carbide's tradition of profiting from extreme corporate irresponsibility. In India, Dow's subsidiary faces manslaughter charges and is considered a fugitive from justice for a pending criminal case related to the 1984 chemical explosion. Dow and UCC's lack of accountability in the disaster continue to affect the lives in Bhopal to this day.

World wide, Dow is involved in human rights abuses: environmental destruction, water and ground contamination, health violations, chemical poisoning, and chemical warfare. Dow Chemical's impact is felt globally from their Midland, Michigan headquarters to New Plymouth, New Zealand. In Midland, Dow has been producing chlorinated chemicals and burning and burying its waste including chemicals that make up Agent Orange. In New Plymouth, New Zealand, 500,000 gallons of Agent Orange were produced and thousands of tons of dioxin-laced waste was dumped in agricultural fields. Dow's toxic legacies of human rights abuses traverse to agricultural fields in Central America where Dow exported EPA-banned pesticide DBCP for use on banana and pineapple crops. As a result, thousands of banana workers were exposed to DBCP and became sterile. In retail markets across the world Dow's dangerous chemicals are present as common household solvents, plastics, paints and pharmaceuticals.

Who's working on it:

- [Dow Accountability Network](#)
- [EarthRights International](#)
- [Vietnam Relief and Responsibility Campaign](#)
- [Fund for Reconciliation and Development](#)
- [The Vietnam Dioxin Collective](#)
- [International Campaign for Justice In Bhopal](#)
- [Students For Bhopal](#) • [Amnesty International-USA](#)
- [Greenpeace International](#)
- [Ecology Center](#)
- [Tittabawassee River Watch](#)
- [Beyond Pesticides](#)

DYNCORP/CSC

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Human rights abuses: causing health problems, environmental devastation and death; endangering lives; physically abusing individuals; sex trafficking

Private security contractors have become the fastest-growing sector of the global economy during the last decade—a \$100-billion-a-year, nearly unregulated industry. DynCorp, one of the providers of these mercenary services, demonstrates the industry's power and potential to abuse human rights. While guarding Afghani statesmen and African oil fields, training Iraqi police forces, eradicating Colombian coca plants, and protecting business interests in hurricane-devastated New Orleans, these hired guns bolster the security of governments and organizations at the expense of many people's human rights.

DynCorp's fumigation of coca crops along the Colombian-Ecuadorian border led Ecuadorian peasants to sue DynCorp in 2001. Plaintiffs argued that DynCorp knew—or should have known—that the herbicides were highly toxic, and should therefore be held accountable for health problems and death among local people and widespread environmental damage to their subsistence agriculture. A Colombian newsweekly called DynCorp—which also sprays herbicides in Peru and Bolivia—"lawless Rambos."

DynCorp's questionable actions in Haiti include its training of the national police force after the first coup against President Aristide, paving the way for (Tonton Macoutes) to return to power.

In 2001, a mechanic with DynCorp blew the whistle on DynCorp employees in Bosnia for rape and trading girls as young as 12 into sex slavery. According to a lawsuit filed by the mechanic, "employees and supervisors were engaging in perverse, illegal and inhumane behavior [and] were purchasing illegal weapons, women, [and] forged passports." The mechanic observed DynCorp employees buying and selling women and bragging about the ages and talents of their female slaves. DynCorp fired the whistleblower, who later claimed that "DynCorp is just as immoral and elite as possible, and any rule they can break they do." The company transferred the employees accused of sex trading out of the country, eventually firing some. None were prosecuted.

Who's working on it:

- [CorpWatch](#)
- [International Labor Rights Fund](#) and the Law Offices of Cristobal Bonifaz are handling the Ecuadorians' suit, with help from EarthRights International, Amazon Alliance, and Friends of the Earth.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

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Human rights violations: environmental degradation, climate change, fueling wars for oil

The US automobile industry is fueling America's addiction to oil. Automobiles are the single largest consumer of oil in the US, a country that constitutes less than five percent of the world's population but consumes 25 percent of its oil. The US addiction to oil is linked with a host of human rights and environmental problems, including human rights abuses in countries such as Nigeria, Ecuador, Sudan, South Africa and Indonesia. The US oil addiction has prompted the US government to cozy up to human rights violating governments such as that of Saudi Arabia. It has pushed indigenous people off their land and destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres of rainforests, which are home to half the planet and animal species on the planet. It has fueled wars for oil, such as the war in Iraq, which has so far caused the deaths of more than 2,100 US troops and an estimated 27,000 to 100,000 Iraqis. It has polluted cities, endangering the health of millions of people who live in high-ozone communities and leading to hundreds of thousands of cases of childhood asthma. And, by being a major contributor to global warming, has increased the likelihood of extreme weather events like Hurricane Katrina, which killed at least 1,289 people.

Among automakers, Ford Motor Company is the worst. Every year since 1999, the US Environmental Protection Agency has ranked Ford cars, trucks and SUVs as having the worst overall fuel economy of any American automaker. Ford's current car and truck fleet has a lower average fuel efficiency than the original Ford Model-T.

Ford is also in last place when it comes to vehicle greenhouse gas emissions. According to a recent report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, Ford has "the absolute worst heat-trapping gas emissions performance of all the Big Six automakers." In fact, if Ford were a country, it would be the 10th largest global warming polluter worldwide, behind Italy.

Amazingly, despite the company's recent greenwashing PR campaign, its record has actually worsened. According to Ford's own sustainability report, between 2003 and 2004, the company's US fleet-wide fuel economy decreased and its CO2 emissions went up. Ford is also lobbying to prevent the U.S. and state governments from improving the situation: the company has lobbied against lawmakers' efforts to increase fuel economy standards at the national level and is also involved in a lawsuit against California's fuel economy standards.

Who's working on it:

- [Bluewater Action Network](#)
- [Energy Action](#)
- [Jumpstart Ford](#), a coalition of Global Exchange, Rainforest Action Network and the Ruckus Society

KBR (KELLOGG, BROWN, AND ROOT): A SUBSIDIARY OF HALLIBURTON CORPORATION

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Human rights violations: Overcharging and providing unnecessary services on taxpayer's dollar, bribery, exploiting third country nationals

KBR is a private company that provides military support services. Notorious for its questionable bookkeeping, dishonest billing practices, and no-bid contracts, KBR has violated human rights on the U.S. dollar.

KBR provides key logistical support for war, occupation and unlawful detention. The company provides the critical support services US troops need to be able to continue their occupation of Iraq. KBR also constructed the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, where hundreds of detainees have languished for more than three years, many of whom have suffered abuse and torture.

KBR's dubious accounting in Iraq came to light in December 2003 when Pentagon auditors questioned possible overcharges for imported gasoline. Former employees have testified about KBR's billing for \$100 laundry bags and \$45 cases of soda, failing to provide simple mechanical parts such as oil filters, feeding soldiers outdated rations, and charging for meals never served.

In June 2005, a previously secret Pentagon audit criticized \$1.4 billion in "questioned" and "unsupported" expenditures.

However, given KBR's history, this is no surprise. In 2002 the company paid \$2 million to settle a Justice Department lawsuit that accused KBR of inflating contract prices at Fort Ord, California. In 2000, the GAO scrutinized KBR for overcharging and providing unnecessary services in the Balkans. Bribes to local officials (such as in Nigeria) or subcontractors also appear to be part of KBR's modus operandi.

Many third-country national (TCN) laborers have been hired by KBR to "rebuild" Iraq. Generally hailing from impoverished Asian countries, they have unexpectedly become part of the largest civilian workforce ever hired in support of a U.S. war.

An intricate network of subcontractors who recruit and employ most TCNs lowers the prime contractors' costs and hinders any oversight by contract auditors. The laborers often take out usurious loans to pay a finder's fee for the overseas jobs. Once abroad, the workers find themselves with few protections and uncertain legal status. TCNs often sleep in crowded trailers and wait outside in scorching heat to eat "slop." Many lack adequate medical care and put in hard labor seven days a week, 10 hours or more a day. Few receive proper workplace safety equipment or adequate protection from incoming mortars and rockets.

KBR is now accused of perpetuating the same system in areas destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Reports have surfaced about KBR's subcontractors exploiting TCN's (this time, Latinos), many of whom are unpaid, unfed, living in squalid conditions and suffering from untreated ailments.

Who's working on it:

- [Corpwatch](#)
- [Center for Corporate Policy](#)
- [Halliburton Watch](#)
- [Houston Global Awareness](#)

LOCKHEED MARTIN

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Human Rights Abuses: War profiteering, warmongering

Lockheed Martin is the world's largest military contractor. In 2003, the year of the Iraq invasion, the company held \$21.9 billion in Pentagon contracts. Providing satellites, planes, missiles, and other lethal high tech items to the Pentagon keeps the profits rolling in. Since 2000, the year Bush was elected, the company's stock value has tripled.

A large company like Lockheed Martin has the ability to shape it's the business environment, and marketing war is very beneficial to the bottom line. As the Center for Corporate Policy (www.corporatepolicy.org) notes, it is no coincidence that Lockheed VP Bruce Jackson—who

helped draft the Republican foreign policy platform in 2000—is a key player at the Project for a New American Century, the intellectual incubator of the Iraq war.

Lockheed Martin is not the only defense contractor that goes behind the scenes to influence public policy, but it is one of the worst. Stephen J. Hadley, who now has Condoleeza Rice's old job as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was formerly a partner in a big DC law firm representing Lockheed Martin. He is only one of the beneficiaries of the so-called revolving door between the military industries and the "civilian" national security apparatus. These war profiteers—the makers of the Trident missile; aircraft like the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the F/A-22 and the C-130 Hercules, as well as high tech space based military components like the DSCS-3 satellite—have a profound and illegitimate influence our country's international policy decisions.

Who's working on it:

- [Brandywine Peace Community](#)
- [Center for Corporate Policy](#)
- [War Resisters League](#)

MONSANTO

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Human Rights Abuses: Displacement, health violations, and child labor

Monsanto is, by far, the largest producer of genetically engineered seeds in the world, dominating 70% to 100% of the market for crops such as soy, cotton, wheat, and corn. The company is also one of the most egregious abusers of the human rights of food sovereignty, access to land, and health.

Monsanto promotes mono-culture—the practice of covering large swaths of land with a single crop. This practice pushes out subsistence farms and destroys arable land by drastically decreasing soil and water quality for years, draining soil of key nutrients. The company also undercuts food prices by flooding countries like Mexico, India, and Brazil with cheap, genetically modified foods, resulting in the displacement of millions of farm workers, who are forced to migrate to cities or work as landless peasants or share croppers.

Monsanto is the world's leading producer of the herbicide glyphosate, marketed as "Roundup." Roundup is sold to small farmers as a pesticide, yet harms crops in the long run as the toxins accumulate in the soil. Plants eventually become infertile, forcing farmers to purchase genetically modified Roundup Ready Seed, a seed that resists the herbicide. This creates a cycle of dependency on Monsanto for both the weed killer and the only seed that can resist it. Both products are patented, and sold at inflated prices.

Roundup Ultra, a version of the pesticide that is unavailable on the commercial market, is regularly employed in fumigation of areas of illicit crop production. However, as it destroys fields of drug plants, it also destroys subsistence crops like banana, palm heart, and coffee. Exposure to the pesticide is documented to cause cancers, skin disorders, spontaneous abortions, premature births, and damage to the gastrointestinal and nervous systems.

According to the India Committee of the Netherlands and the International Labor Rights Fund, Monsanto also employs child labor. In India, an estimated 12,375 children work in cottonseed production for farmers paid by Indian and multinational seed companies, including Monsanto. A number of children have died or became seriously ill due to exposure to pesticides.

Monsanto's yearly profits are \$5.4 billion.

Who's working on it:

- [Food First](#)
- [GM Watch](#)
- [GRAIN](#)
- [India Resource Center](#)
- [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#)
- [Landless Workers' Movement](#)
- [Organic Consumers' Association](#)
- [Via Campesina](#)

NESTLÉ USA

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Human Rights Violations: Abusive child labor, repression of worker rights, aggressive marketing of harmful products, violation of national health and environmental laws

There's a secret in the chocolate industry, and once people find out about it, their chocolate doesn't taste as sweet any more: Much of the chocolate eaten all over the world is made of cocoa beans that have been harvested by illegal child labor, including child slave labor.

The problem of illegal and forced child labor is rampant in the chocolate industry, because more than forty percent of the world's cocoa supply comes from the Ivory Coast, a country that the US State Department estimates had approximately 109,000 child laborers working in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in what's been described as the worst form of child labor. In 2001, Save the Children Canada reported that 15,000 children between 9 and 12 years old, many from impoverished Mali, had been tricked or sold into slavery on West African cocoa farms, many for just \$30 each. Just this summer, the International Labor Rights Fund and a Birmingham law firm filed a class-action lawsuit against Nestlé and several of its suppliers on behalf of former child slaves.

Nestlé is the target of this lawsuit and is singled out by corporate campaigners, because it is the third largest buyer of cocoa from the Ivory Coast, has processing, storage and export facilities there, and is well aware of the tragically unjust labor practices taking place on the farms with which it continues to do business. Nestlé and other chocolate manufacturers agreed to end the use of abusive and forced child labor on cocoa farms by July 1, 2005, but they failed to do so.

Nestlé is also notorious for its aggressive marketing of infant formula in poor countries the 1980s, which may have led to the deaths of countless children who did not receive the nutrients that would have been present in breast milk. Because of this practice, Nestlé is still one of the most boycotted corporations in the world, and its infant formula is still controversial. In Italy in 2005, police seized more than two million liters of Nestlé infant formula that was contaminated with the chemical isopropylthioxanthone (ITX), a component in the packaging's ink. It turned out the company knew about the contamination for months, but did not recall the formula.

Additionally, violations of labor rights are reported from Nestlé factories in numerous countries. In Colombia, Nestlé replaced the entire factory staff with lower-wage workers and did not renew the collective employment contract. In Cabuyao Laguna, Philippines, a 3-year strike against Nestlé was partially precipitated by Nestlé's refusal to include the retirement benefits of the workers in the collective bargaining agreement, despite the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the workers. The company has brutally attempted to break the strike; this year, two unionists, including prominent labor leader Diosdado Fortuna, have been murdered.

Who's working on it:

- [Global Exchange](#)
- [International Baby Milk Action](#)
- [International Labor Rights Fund](#)

PHILIP MORRIS USA and PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL (a.k.a. the Altria Group Inc.)

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Human Rights Abuse: aggressively marketing lethal products

According to the World Health Organization, tobacco is the second major cause of preventable death in the world. Nearly five million lives per year are claimed by the tobacco industry, whose products results in premature death for half the people who use them. Among tobacco companies, Philip Morris is notorious. Now called Altria, it is the world's largest and most profitable cigarette corporation and maker of Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Parliament, Basic and many other brands of cigarettes. Philip Morris is also a leader in pushing smoking with young people around the world.

Philip Morris has consistently misled consumers about the dangers of its products. Documents uncovered in a lawsuit filed against the tobacco industry by the state of Minnesota showed that Philip Morris and other leading tobacco corporations knew very well of the dangers of tobacco products and the addictiveness of nicotine, yet they continued to deny these realities in public until the internal company documents were brought to light. To this day, Philip Morris deceives consumers about the harm of its products by offering light, mild and low-tar cigarettes that give consumers the illusion that these brands are "healthier" than traditional cigarettes.

Philip Morris has actively targeted the world's youth by researching smoking patterns and attitudes and targeting youth as potential customers. Marlboro cigarettes are the top brand for youth in the United States. Although the company says it doesn't want kids to smoke, it spends millions of dollars every day marketing and promoting cigarettes to youth. Overseas, it has even hired underage Marlboro girls to distribute free cigarettes to other children and sponsored concerts where cigarettes were handed out to minors.

As anti-tobacco campaigns and government regulations are slowing tobacco use in Western countries, Philip Morris has aggressively moved into developing country markets, where smoking and smoking-related deaths are on the rise. According to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, tobacco's killing fields are shifting to the developing world and Eastern Europe, where most of the world's smokers now live. Preliminary numbers released by the World Health Organization predict global deaths due to smoking-related illnesses will nearly double by 2020, with more than three-quarters of those deaths in the developing world.

Meanwhile, Philip Morris' profits continue to grow. In the third quarter of 2005 alone, Altria's net revenue was \$25 billion, up from 2004 in large part due to the high performance of Philip Morris USA and Philip Morris International.

Who's working on it:

- [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#)
- [Essential Action](#)
- [Framework Convention Alliance](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

PFIZER

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Human Rights Abuse: Killer price-gouging

Pfizer is one of the largest and most profitable pharmaceutical companies in the world with revenues of \$52.5 billion in 2004. In addition to Viagra, Zoloft, Zithromax, and Norvasc, Pfizer produces the HIV/AIDS-related drugs Rescriptor, Viracept and Diflucan (fluconazole). Like other drug companies, they sell these drugs at prices poor people cannot afford and aggressively fight efforts to make it easier for generic drugs to enter the market. They have even cut off drug shipments to Canadian pharmacies that sold Pfizer drugs to patients in the United States for

costs more affordable than those offered in US pharmacies.

To ensure its profits, Pfizer invests heavily in US campaign contributions. Though it can't seem to afford to offer life-saving drugs at affordable prices, it was able to scrounge up \$544,900 for mostly Republican candidates in election cycle 2006 (still in progress) and \$1,630,556 in the 2004 election cycle.

Drug companies' refusal to put human beings' health ahead of their own greed and profits is especially deadly for people with HIV/AIDS. AIDS killed 3.1 million people in 2004, a shocking death rate that could be greatly reduced if treatment was made available to people who right now cannot afford it. Pfizer and other drug companies have refused to grant generic licenses for HIV/AIDS drugs to countries like Brazil, South Africa, and the Dominican Republic, where patients are forced to pay \$20 per weekly pill for drugs like fluconazole, though the average national wage is only \$120 per month.

Instead of helping eradicate the world's worst pandemic in history, the World Trade Organization has made matters worse. Beginning in 1995, the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) protected companies by stopping WTO member countries from making generic versions of their drugs. Because of public pressure, the WTO announced a new agreement in 2003 to allow poor countries to access cheap generic antiretroviral drugs, but in practice, the drugs are just as inaccessible to poor countries as they were before.

Who's working on it:

- [ACTUP: New York, Philadelphia, Paris](#)
- [Consumer Project on Technology](#)
- [Doctors Without Borders](#)
- [Generics Now](#)
- [Health GAP](#)
- [Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility](#)
- [Treatment Action Campaign](#)

SUEZ-LYONNAISE DES EAUX (SLDE)

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Human rights abuse: Water privatization

The privatization of water has had a disastrous impact on the human right to clean water, and the French company Suez is the worst perpetrator of this abuse. The company's billions of dollars in profit come at the expense of poor people living in countries where thousands lack access to potable water, and, because of private water contracts, are also facing skyrocketing water prices.

Suez goes by many names around the world—Ondeo, SITA, and others—to mask its worldwide net of controversial activities. But no sleight of hand can hide the fact that Suez, which is one of the largest water companies in the world, has been a leader in turning the human right to water into an unaffordable luxury. According to Public Citizen, Suez has raised water rates, cut off the water of people unable to pay, refused to extend services to poverty-stricken neighborhoods, and then threatened legal action when contracts are terminated.

For example, in Manila, Philippines, after seven years of water privatization under a Suez company (Maynilad Water) contract, studies showed that water rates increased in some neighborhoods by 400 to 700 percent. These studies also showed that the negligence of the company resulted in cholera and gastroenteritis outbreaks that killed six people and severely sickened 725 in Manila's Tondo district.

In Argentina, Suez mixed companies have refused to make promised investments in the water infrastructure, which has resulted in serious water pollution problems. They also charge high consumer rates and cut off water access for citizens unable to pay, leaving those most in need without access to a life-sustaining natural resource.

In Bolivia, a Suez company (Aguas de Illimani) left 200,000 people without access to water and caused a revolt when it tried to charge between \$335 and \$445 to connect a private home to the water supply. Countless people were unable to afford this charge in a country whose yearly per capita GDP is \$915.

Unfortunately, the IMF and World Bank are playing a key role in pushing water privatization all over the world. Many countries have been required to open up their water supply to private companies as a condition for receiving IMF loans, and the World Bank has approved millions of dollars in loans for the privatization of water systems.

Who's working on it:

- [Corporate Accountability International](#)
- [Food and Water Watch](#)
- [Stop Suez](#)

WAL-MART

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Human Rights Abuses: worker rights violations, labor discrimination, union busting

Wal-Mart is the biggest corporation in the world. It owns 5,100 stores worldwide and employs 1.3 million workers in the United States and 400,000 abroad, as well as a millions more in the factories of its suppliers. Because of the company's enormity, its business model has a huge influence on workers and businesses around the world; so far Wal-Mart has used that influence

to ruthlessly drive down costs as a means of making profit, violating a vast array of human rights and labor rights along the way.

Many people have heard of the way that Wal-Mart steamrolls its way into every possible town, destroying local supermarkets and countless small businesses. We have also heard about Wal-Mart's long track record of worker abuse, from forced overtime to sex discrimination to illegal child labor to relentless union busting. Wal-Mart also notoriously fails to provide health insurance to over half of its employees, who are then left to rely on themselves or taxpayers, who provide for a portion of their healthcare needs through government Medicaid.

Less well known is the fact that Wal-Mart maintains its low price level by allowing substandard labor conditions at the overseas factories producing most of its goods. The company continually demands lower prices from its suppliers, who, in turn, make more outrageous and abusive demands on their workers in order to meet Wal-Mart's requirements. In September 2005, the International Labor Rights Fund filed a lawsuit on behalf of Wal-Mart supplier sweatshop workers in China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nicaragua and Swaziland. The workers were denied minimum wages, forced to work overtime without compensation, and were denied legally mandated health care. Other worker rights violations that have been found in foreign factories that produce goods for Wal-Mart include locked bathrooms, starvation wages, pregnancy tests, denial of access to health care, and workers being fired and blacklisted if they try to defend their rights.

Additionally, nearly 70% of Wal-Mart's goods are made in factories in China, a country where garment workers are often kept under 24-hour-a-day surveillance and can be fired for even discussing factory conditions. The Chinese government does not allow independent human rights groups to exist, and all attempts to form independent unions have been crushed. Wal-Mart refuses to reveal its Chinese contractors and will not allow independent, unannounced inspections of its contractors' facilities.

Who's working on it:

- [Wal-Mart Watch](#)
- [ACORN](#)
- [Business Ethics International](#)
- [Sierra Club](#)
- [Wake-Up Wal-Mart](#)
- [International Labor Rights Fund](#)
- [United Students Against Sweatshops](#)