

Response from Fyffes

31st January 2020

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited Fyffes to respond to the supposed violation of the right to freedom of association of workers belonging to the Agro-industrial Workers' Union (STAS) in Choluteca, Honduras:

- "[Honduran Workers Fight Union Busting Multinational](#)", 22nd January 2020, Progressive

Fyffes sent the following statement:

Fyffes is firmly committed to freedom of association. We absolutely do not discriminate against workers because of their union affiliation. We have hired STAS affiliated workers, workers with no union affiliation and workers affiliated with the legal unions.

The STAS union provided us with two lists of names, from last season and this season. We have hired every STAS-affiliated worker for whom there are payroll records and who are free to work. This amounts to 44 workers.

To ensure our workers understand freedom of association, we provided freedom of association training to all our workers through an independent non-governmental organisation called FUNDAHRSE that are experts in labour law, both international as well as Honduran law.

STAS was denied the right to bargain on behalf of workers at our farms by the Honduran Ministry of Labour. In Honduran law, there can only be one legal union per operation. The Honduran Ministry of Labour granted legal personality to a union for each of the farms Suragroh and Melon Export. Despite this, we are meeting with STAS regularly to find a way for them to represent their workers as a legal union.

Over 6,000 of our workers have joined the legal unions on our farms. Last season these unions negotiated collective bargaining agreements which were submitted to and endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and will apply for three years.

These unions are not management controlled – they formed out of workers committees that have existed for many years on our farms.

Finally, we are investigating a large number of complaints by our workers against the individual you mention. Our code of conduct – the *Fyffes Principles* (<https://www.fyffes.com/who-we-are/our-principles>) – outlines the minimum behaviours expected of our employees. Any employee raising a concern regarding misconduct is entitled for that concern to be investigated.

We have asked to meet with ILRF and Fair World Project several times to find a solution and a way forward. Instead they have deployed a relentless and misleading campaign which seeks to deter customers from purchasing Honduran melons, which has the potential to destroy the livelihoods of up to 8,000 workers in one of the poorest economies in Central America and indeed the world.

All our farms undergo regular independent audits for health and safety, environmental and labour-related standards. More information about the conditions at our melon farms, is kept up to date on this webpage <https://www.fyffes.com/news/article/fyffes-progress-in-honduras>.