

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ALARCÓN JOINS WITH UNI GLOBAL UNION AND UFCW TO RELEASE A NEW REPORT DOCUMENTING TESCO FRESH & EASY'S POOR LABOR PRACTICES IN U.S.**

**Los Angeles, CA** – Today, an international network of more than 900 labor unions released a report documenting Tesco Fresh & Easy's "poor labor practices" in the United States. The coalition, known as the UNI Tesco Global Union Alliance, represents Tesco workers in 12 countries around the world.

The group's report, *Tesco's Employment Practices in the USA*, was compiled in response to complaints from Fresh & Easy workers and information and testimony obtained by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW). The report was written by Professor John Logan of UC Berkeley.

The report by UNI, which represents more than 20 million workers around the world, documents Tesco's labor practices, including:

- Adopting a systematic anti-worker approach, including holding captive employee meetings and distributing literature aimed at influencing employees against union membership;
- Employing principally part-time workers, preventing employees from earning a living wage;
- Imposing such strict conditions on pensions that most employees will never receive matched contributions from Tesco;
- Refusing to meet with union representatives even to discuss the possibility of organizing among employees;
- Rejecting a legitimate recognition request from a majority of employees in one Californian store.

The report was released today to the public at an event hosted by Los Angeles Councilmember Richard Alarcón at Los Angeles City Hall.

"During the Revolutionary War, patriots rallied against the British's policy of taxation without representation and now, similarly, we are seeing a British company with an imperialist attitude – one of profit without representation," said Councilmember Alarcón. "Tesco allows for labor contracts with employees in its home country, but treats workers in other countries, including the United States, as second class citizens. In the spirit of our revolutionary brothers and sisters, we must rise up against this unfair treatment of workers and demand equitable labor standards for all."

Phil Bowyer, UNI Deputy General Secretary, said: "Tesco Fresh & Easy has the potential to make a real contribution to US grocery retailing and we want it to be successful. But its success should not be at the expense of its employees and of their rights. Fresh & Easy should abide by Tesco's global policies and treat its employees with fairness and respect. That is all they ask and the least they deserve."

Professor John Logan of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UC Berkeley, said: "The employment practices of Fresh & Easy in the United States are in stark contrast with Tesco's stated policies on human rights, and its approach in the UK, where Tesco has been unionized since 1969. While Tesco refuses even to meet the UFCW in the USA, it actively encourages its employees to join the UK retail union, with which the company has a much-praised partnership agreement. If partnership is good enough for British workers, why isn't it good enough for hard-working Americans?"

UFCW Deputy Organizing Director for Global Strategies Michael Bride said: "Fresh & Easy has repeatedly rejected our requests to discuss a partnership agreement and it is clear from the labor practices exposed in this report that the company is actively trying to silence workers' attempts to gain a voice on the job. Even the chairman of a British Parliamentary committee last month accused Tesco of 'union-busting activities.' These type of actions hurt workers and their communities, and we will continue to campaign for the rights of workers for union representation and fair treatment, free from intimidation or reprisals."

The report on Tesco's labor practices in the United States is one of three published by UNI. Similar reports also are being released analyzing the company's operations in Thailand and South Korea.

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### **Notes to editors**

UNI's Tesco Global Alliance country reports on the USA, Thailand and South Korea can be downloaded at [www.tescounionalliance.org](http://www.tescounionalliance.org)

The transcript of the UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights, at which Tesco was accused of "union-busting activities" can be downloaded at

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200809/jtselect/jtrights/uc559-iii/uc55902.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200809/jtselect/jtrights/uc559-iii/uc55902.htm)

**UNI Global Union** is an international union based in Switzerland, representing more than 20 million workers in 900 trades unions worldwide.

**The United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)** has 1.3 million members in the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico, mostly in groceries and meatpacking/food processing.

**Richard Alarcón** is a Los Angeles City Councilmember for Council District 7. He is a former State Senator and served as Chairman of the Labor and Industrial Relations Committee.

**Philip Bowyer** is UNI's first Deputy General Secretary. Before the creation of UNI, he was General Secretary of the Communications International (CI), one of UNI's founding partners.

**Professor John Logan** is the Director of Research at the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UC Berkeley. He compiled the UNI report on Tesco in the USA.

**Michael Bride** is the Deputy Organizing Director for Global Strategies for the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union. He works on campaigns with and on behalf of labor unions both in the USA and worldwide.