

## Colombia: Companies paid paramilitaries

*by UPI*

BOGOTA - A Colombian paramilitary leader said several U.S. companies paid the right-wing gunmen responsible for thousands of deaths.

Incarcerated leader Salvatore Mancuso testified that Chiquita, Del Monte and Dole paid the paramilitary forces over the last several years, El Tiempo newspaper reported Friday.

In March, Colombian President Alvaro Uribe said his government was considering seeking the extradition of officials from Chiquita Brands International after the company admitted paying right-wing paramilitary groups.

Cincinnati-based Chiquita agreed to pay a \$25 million fine for paying the armed groups \$1.7 million for protection for its employees from 1997 to 2004, ABC News reported.

The right-wing death squads are considered a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department.

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