

## **Conflict And Militarization Continues In Aguan Valley After Massacre Of Campesinos**

By Karen Spring, Rights Action, [spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:spring.kj@gmail.com)

On Tuesday, November 23 at 7:00 am, between 300-400 military officers and a reported seven military commanders occupied the offices of the National Agrarian Institute (INA) in the department of Colon.

The occupation of the INA office occurs just eight days after the murder of five campesinos and the severe injury of four members of the Campesino Movement of Aguan (MCA) by private security guards of large African palm producer, Miguel Facusse in Bajo Aguan, Colon. Facusse's African palm company, Dinant Corporation is the recipient of a \$30 million dollar loan from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation. (For more information, see Annie Bird's article below).

Since the massacre a week ago, the region has been heavily militarized by state forces and various check points have been set up along the major roads to 'guarantee the security of the region.' The military and police forces are accused by various campesinos organizations in the region of acting in favour of the large land owners, arriving hours after the conflicts and deaths occur and not carrying out the proper investigations often solely accusing the campesinos as being at fault.

INA, the state office responsible for titling land and working to resolve land disputes, and its director Caesar Ham have been publicly accused by large land owner Miguel Facusse to be assisting the campesinos in the region in the efforts to recuperate land illegally taken from them. It is speculated that today's occupation of the INA office is an attempt to frame the

state institute for providing arms and supporting the campesino struggles in the region.

In an outcry against the killings and in an act of solidarity, campesinos from six departments of Honduras (Atlantida, Colon, Olancho, Santa Barbara, Cortez and Choluteca) began land occupations shortly after the November 15th murders. To pressure the government and demonstrate their force, campesinos will be arriving in Tegucigalpa on Thursday for a gathering outside of the National Congress.

“WE ARE JUST POOR CAMPESINOS FIGHTING FOR OUR CHILDREN”: IN THE HOSPITAL AWAITING AN OPERATION

Photo: 2360

Julian from the community of Guadalupe Carney and one of the four MCA campesinos injured was shot in the head during the confrontation with Facusse's security guards. He remains in the hospital where he is awaiting an operation to reconstruct parts of his face.

A bullet entered in the right side of his face just below his cheek bone, passed through his upper lip area and exited on the left side of his face, fracturing his cheek bone. “The upper part of my mouth is destroyed. I can't eat, just liquids but not other types of good.” Almost all of Julian's upper teeth and gums have been destroyed.

FUNDS ARE NEEDED:

The Campesino Movement of Aguan (MCA) and the families of the nine affected campesinos have many medical expenses and funeral costs.

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WORLD BANK-FUNDED BIOFUEL CORPORATION MASSACRES SIX  
HONDURAN CAMPESINOS

By Annie Bird, [annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org)

MASSACRED WHILE WORKING THEIR FIELDS

Approximately six months ago, campesino farmers in Trujillo, Colon organized in the Campesino Movement of the Aguan, the MCA, were awarded provisional title to a farm which neighbors their community, as part of a long standing negotiation with Dinant Corporation, a biofuel company, whose land claims are illegitimate.

Since that time, the small farmers worked the land. In recent weeks they had noticed incursions into their land by armed security forces employed by the biofuel company, Dinant.

On Monday, November 15, the farmers went to their fields but were then attacked by Dinant security. Six were killed in the massacre and two more are in critical condition.

The massacre occurred the same day that the de facto Honduran president Pepe Lobo had planned to meet with the director of the US government development fund, the Millennium Challenge, in Denver to ask for funding for so called "renewable energy" - in Honduras, principally biofuels and dams.

## WORLD BANK AND OTHER "DEVELOPMENT" GROUPS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MASSACRE

The "renewable energy" plan Lobo is shopping around may be the result of an Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) funded technical support grant (T-1101) to the de facto government ushered in after the June 28 military coup. In November 2009, under a coup government and amidst grave human rights violations, the World Bank's (WB) International Finance Corporation gave Dinant Corporation a \$30 million loan for biofuel production, and now shares responsibility in the massacre.

Policies supposedly intended to stop climate change are in reality fueling climate change. The world must invest in a renewable way of life, not destructive "renewable energy". Scientists have analyzed that biofuel industry together with the climate change prevention mechanisms currently promoted could actually result in the destruction of half of the planet's forests.

In the same way that massacres cannot be stopped when justice systems are destroyed by military coups, the destruction of our planet cannot be stopped when the systems of governance have been hijacked by corporations who can buy off, or that failing, militarily intervene in nations attempting to build just forms of governance. Human rights and the environment cannot be separated.

## US MILITARY BASE BOUGHT FOR AGRARIAN REFORM AND STOLEN FOR AGRIBUSINESS

During the past decade, campesinos in Honduras have challenged a series of illegitimate land titles obtained by agrobusinessmen in a massive former US military training center known as the CREM.

On this land, over 5,000 hectares, the US military trained military forces from across Central America, particularly the Contra

paramilitary forces attacking the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Once the CREM center's operations ended, the Honduran government bought the land from a US citizen through the Honduran land reform program.

However, instead of being sold to small farmers, as the government was obligated by law to do, the land was illegally divided up between several large landholders as a result of corruption and fraudulent titling processes. A coalition of land rights organizations in Honduras organized in the Campesino Movement of the Aguan, the MCA, to challenge the illegal titles. Little by little the land titles were awarded to groups of campesinos organized in the MCA.

The titling process has been slow and marked by violent attacks by the large landholders who have influence in the government, police and military forces. Among the last of the CREM lands to remain in the hands of agribusiness interests is the farm called El Tumbador, approximately 700 hectares controlled by the Dinant Corporation, property of Honduras' most powerful agro-businessman, Miguel Facusse.

A biofuel businessman with interests in several corporations, Miguel Facusse is infamous for the use of fraudulent methods, including intimidation and violence, to obtain lands throughout the country.

#### THE WORLD BANK BACKS THE CORRUPT AND VIOLENT DINANT CORPORATION

Since the military coup in June 2009, Honduras has been ruled by illegitimate, repressive regimes.

In November 2009, the WB extended a loan of \$30 million to Dinant for its biofuel production in that region, despite a widely documented history of violence and corruption by the biofuel company. The WB failed in its human rights obligations in this case and shares responsibility for this massacre.

Given the conditions in Honduras, the WB must suspend both private and public sector funding to Honduras, and freeze funding of biofuels in the region. The biofuel industry in Central and South America violently displaces small farmers and contributes to global warming.

Another multinational public fund that finances international private investment, the Interamerican Investment Corporation, has also recently funded Dinant.

### “GREENWASHING” AND CORPORATE WELFARE – THE HIJACKING OF CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDS

Biofuels are one of the fastest growing industries, a sector that sees high levels of investment from venture capitalists. This massive growth has been stimulated by taxpayer dollars pouring into renewable energy through many funding agencies, but particularly the IADB, the WB, and carbon emissions trading markets.

The trade in carbon credits was created as an element of the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997. It attempts to implement a market based system to curb global warming by levying penalties against heavy polluting industries that produce high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon burning energy generation plants. But those penalties can be paid off, or offset, by the purchase of carbon credits.

Carbon credits are given to industries that undertake activities that reduce emission of gases that generate climate change, and those can then be sold on the market to companies that generate global warming.

The system is riddled with problems, beginning with the fact that the big money to be made in “green” industry creates a big incentive to greenwash, to disguise polluting activities as

activities that do not pollute in order to cash in on climate change funds.

This is the case with biofuels.

#### BIOFUELS COULD DESTROY HALF THE WORLD'S FORESTS

Even as governments pour taxpayer money into biofuels, it is being demonstrated that biofuel production contributes significantly to global warming, through the destruction of wetlands, displacement of small farmers and food production, often to cut forests, direct clear cutting of forests for biofuel production, and even cutting forests to generate wood pellets that make ethanol.

One study published in Science magazine in October 2009 analyzed regulation set up in the Kyoto Accords which promotes the use of biofuels, but finds that these measures could result in the loss of up to half of the world's forests.

As the negative impacts were beginning to be felt, though the extent is only beginning to be understood, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and others committed to market incentives for polluters, set up the Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil.

This body certifies palm oil as having been 'sustainably' produced. In May 2010, WWF signed an agreement with Miguel Facusse's Dinant Corporation to begin the process of certifying Dinant palm oil. The WB, in November 2009, shortly after disbursing Dinant's loan, froze palm oil funding while it created its palm oil strategy, expected to be completed in March 2011.

#### US CORPORATIONS COULD MAKE \$27 TRILLION OFF "LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" CONVERSION TO BIOFUELS

By the time these impacts were being seen, big corporations, with their lobbies, were drooling over the potential profits. The WWF is strongly committed to paying off big business to reduce emissions. A recent WWF study urges taxpayer money be

poured into renewable energy in “lesser developed countries” (LDCs) in order to stimulate job growth in the United States.

Governments are committing to insuring that a certain percentage of fuel consumption be converted to biofuel consumption around the world but especially in “LDCs.” This will generate a huge market for technology to convert engines and other existing infrastructure, which according to WWF could represent a \$27 trillion dollar market for US corporations.

Faced with the powerful corporate lobby corrupting and pressuring governments around the globe, and sometimes promoting military interventions to back their interests, changing policies to really fight climate change as opposed to subsidizing corporations seems a quixotic dream, as was seen in the failed summit on climate change in Copenhagen last year.

At the 16th international summit on climate change in Copenhagen, nations agreed to set up an, as yet, unclear mechanism called the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation), which would focus on curbing deforestation. Paradoxically, incentives for forest preservation are still banned, and the potential for biofuel stimulated deforestation of half of the world’s forests is still not addressed.

It is important to remember that the WWF and others who believe in and promote environmental market economics have promoted a system of biosphere privatization which allows degrading activities to be carried out by private companies that subsidize non-governmental organizations that manage the biospheres, while ignoring the rights of campesino communities and indigenous peoples.

**GOVERNMENTS SHOULD INVEST IN THE POOR, NOT IN THE SUPER RICH**

The international community’s failure to substantively address climate change is a result the unwillingness to acknowledge

and name the economic and political policies and actors that are responsible for climate harm.

The “free” market cannot correct the damage it has done, further investing in the same actors and under the same policy framework that generated climate change cannot reverse it.

To reverse climate change, the wealthiest nations and people of the world must change how they live. Indigenous and campesino communities have more sustainable ways of life, have learned to live in a sustainable way with the resources they produce. But they are being displaced and massacred to usher in the concentration of land and wealth, the genocide of a sustainable way of life.

Rather than subsidizing corporate mass destruction, the nations of the world must invest in a different way of life, and hold accountable those that destroy human life and destroy our only and irreplaceable, planet.

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## WHAT TO DO

Even as Honduras has been suspended from the Organization of American States, even as most Latin American governments refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the illegitimate and repressive regime in place in Honduras, the governments of the US and Canada are working the hardest to support and legitimize this very regime.

Rights Action asks that Americans and Canadians continue to send this, and other information, to your own senators, congress

members and parliamentarians, insisting that they do every thing they can to ensure that the US and Canada suspend military and economic relations with the Honduran regime and demand full legal accountability for the massacre of these 6 campesinos in Aguan and all cases of State sponsored or tolerated repression.

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SPEAKERS: Contact us to plan educational presentations in your community, school, place of worship, home  
([info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org))

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA: Form your own group and/ or join one of our educational delegation-seminars to learn first hand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles  
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\* RECOMMENDED DAILY NEWS: [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org) / [www.upsidedownworld.org](http://www.upsidedownworld.org) / [www.dominionpaper.ca](http://www.dominionpaper.ca)

\* RECOMMENDED BOOKS: Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"; Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"; James Loewen's "Lies My Teacher Told Me"; Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"; Paolo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"; Dr Seuss's "Horton Hears A Who"

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