

## **Biofuel (The New Banana) Republic**

By suzanna.reiss, NACLA, Sep. 15, 2011

<https://nacla.org/blog/2011/9/15/biofuel-new-banana-republic>

It is not surprising to hear that representatives of the U.S. State Department stationed in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, believed since at least March 2004 [1] that the wealthiest man in Honduras, biofuel magnate and political powerhouse Miguel Facussé, was involved in the cocaine trade.

It is not surprising, but it is disturbing.

Facussé was a solid U.S. government ally [2] in the 2009 overthrow of President Manuel Zelaya, and he has also been accused of documented human rights abuses [3] against communities living on lands he sought to monopolize for an extractive biofuel export-oriented palm oil industry.

This is all detailed in the final cache of documents recently released by WikiLeaks.

Beyond the immediate scandalous implications of the revelations (a major player in the U.S.-backed overthrow of a democratically elected government had known ties to drug trafficking even while he helped negotiate the post-coup transition government [4] with U.S. representatives) are a number of other sobering phenomena.

The recently appointed U.S. ambassador to Honduras, Lisa Kubiske, also an established advocate for the biofuel industry [5], recently demonized drug traffickers as terrorists [6] apparently unaware, or unmoved by these revelations implicating contacts at her diplomatic post. "Narcotraffickers and the gangs that support them are hardly different from terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda.

They launch savage attacks on people to intimidate entire communities and instill fear in the public at large," she said.

Biofuel, unlike bananas, is not destined for human consumption. But the monocrop export economy was never geared toward sustaining the population. Today, in a world where food should be in abundance but is unnecessarily and selectively rare, the transition from bananas to fuel represents only the intensification of a capitalist logic that has increasingly valued fuel (whether destined to sustain the labor of humans or machines) at the expense of agricultural practices geared toward the sustenance of human life.

In fact, cultivating land for fuel rather than food has contributed to global food shortages [7] and has fostered widespread instability as profit motive trumps considerations of human or ecological justice.

What is happening in Honduras is a prime example.

Annie Bird for rightsaction.org [8] has documented [9] the massacres of people challenging the exploitative economic program advanced by biofuel magnates like Facussé and representatives of the U.S. government.

As Jesse Freeston of theRealNews.com [10] reports in "Battle for Land in Post-Coup Honduras" [video below], the real terrorists in the countryside where biofuel power reigns are capitalism's security forces. Private security, military, police, and paramilitary forces have all been responsible for the violent displacement of people [9] and communities, including dozens of political assassinations of indigenous organizers, labor leaders and reporters.

(The Real News:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1s29zCqVQE>, &  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe9pdsZM2MM>)

It is commonplace for governments in the Americas to label their political opponents “drug traffickers.” It is more rare when their own blatant trafficking — and criminal impunity — is out there for everyone to see.

[Read more of Suzanna Reiss' blog, Traffick Jam [11], or check out the Jan/Feb issue of the NACLA Report on the Americas, "¡Golpistas! Coups and Democracy in the 21st Century [12]."

#### LINKS:

[1]

[www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=04TEGUCIGALPA672&amp;q=facusse%20miguel](http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=04TEGUCIGALPA672&amp;q=facusse%20miguel)

[2]

[www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09TEGUCIGALPA901&amp;q=facusse%20miguel](http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09TEGUCIGALPA901&amp;q=facusse%20miguel)

[3]

[www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;source=web&amp;cd=1&amp;ved=0CCIQFjAA&amp;url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kua.fi%2Ffilebank%2F3870-](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;source=web&amp;cd=1&amp;ved=0CCIQFjAA&amp;url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kua.fi%2Ffilebank%2F3870-Honduras_FFM_Report_Bajo_Aguan.pdf&amp;rct=j&amp;q=HONDURAS%3A%20Human%20Rights%20Violations%20in%20Bajo%20Agu%C3%A1n&amp;ei=XcVxTvWKEMTYiAKTxbyhCQ&amp;usg=AFQjCNF9ovBLQh09f7SNU07_oKg2GWdlcg&amp;cad=rja)

[Honduras\\_FFM\\_Report\\_Bajo\\_Aguan.pdf&amp;rct=j&amp;q=HONDURAS%3A%20Human%20Rights%20Violations%20in%20Bajo%20Agu%C3%A1n&amp;ei=XcVxTvWKEMTYiAKTxbyhCQ&amp;usg=AFQjCNF9ovBLQh09f7SNU07\\_oKg2GWdlcg&amp;cad=rja](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;source=web&amp;cd=1&amp;ved=0CCIQFjAA&amp;url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kua.fi%2Ffilebank%2F3870-Honduras_FFM_Report_Bajo_Aguan.pdf&amp;rct=j&amp;q=HONDURAS%3A%20Human%20Rights%20Violations%20in%20Bajo%20Agu%C3%A1n&amp;ei=XcVxTvWKEMTYiAKTxbyhCQ&amp;usg=AFQjCNF9ovBLQh09f7SNU07_oKg2GWdlcg&amp;cad=rja)

[4]

[www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09TEGUCIGALPA900&amp;q=facusse%20miguel](http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09TEGUCIGALPA900&amp;q=facusse%20miguel)

[5] <http://quotha.net/node/1725>

[6] <http://honduras.usembassy.gov/sp-091111-eng.html>

[7] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/jun/01/biofuels-driving-food-prices-higher>

[8] <http://www.rightsaction.org/>

[9] <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/news-briefs-archives-68/3198-honduras-aguan-massacres-continue-to-support-production-of-biodiesel>

[10]

www.therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com\_content&ask=view&id=272

[11] <https://nacla.org/blog/traffick-jam>

[12] <https://nacla.org/edition/6883>

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**TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS**

for grassroots and campesino organizations working for justice, an end to impunity and the building of real democracy in Honduras, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS:

<http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

DONATIONS OF STOCK: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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**3 SOLIDARITY DELEGATIONS TO GUATEMALA AND/OR HONDURAS ...**

Please join a Rights Action education-solidarity delegation to:

**1- HONDURAS, JANUARY 6-15, 2012**

**“ACCOMPANIMENT AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY DELEGATION”**

Sponsored by Alliance for Global Justice, Join AfGJ Coordinator Chuck Kaufman, Karen Spring (long-time Honduras human rights accompanier with Rights Action) and Tanya Kerssen (food policy

analyst from Food First). For an application, send an email to AFGJ@AFGJ.org

**2- HONDURAS & GUATEMALA, JANUARY 2012 (EXACT DATES TBD)  
“MINING, BIOFUELS & MILITARIZATION: US MILITARY AID &  
CANADIAN-AMERICAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS”**

Sponsored by Rights Action, join Annie Bird (Rights Action co-director). For more information: annie@rightsaction.org, 202-680-3002.

**3- GUATEMALA, MARCH 10-17, 2012  
“DAMS, MINING & AFRICAN PALM PRODUCTION \* versus \*  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & HUMAN  
RIGHTS”**

Sponsored by Rights Action, join Grahame Russell (Rights Action co-director). For more information: info@rightsaction.org, 860-352-2448

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**KEEP ON WRITING YOUR OWN ELECTED POLITICIANS – NO MORE  
POLITICS & BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH WAR CRIMINALS & REPRESSIVE  
REGIMES**

North Americans should send and keep on sending this information to your own elected Senators, Members of Congress, Members of Parliament, asking them: What are they doing to prioritize respect for and defense of human rights in all international relationships? What are they doing to ensure that American and Canadian government and military policies and exchanges and business and investors interests are not – directly or indirectly – aiding and abetting, and benefiting from, State repression in Honduras?

- CANADA: MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT:  
<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

- USA - CONGRESS: Go to <http://www.house.gov/> to get info for your member of Congress, and call: 202-224-3121
- USA - SENATE: Go to <http://www.senate.gov/> to get contact for your Senator, and call: 202-224-3121

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- Follow Rights Action on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org](http://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org)