Tegucigalpa, M.D.C.  
October 17th, 2013

**José Miguel Vivanco**  
**Director**  
**Human Rights Watch**  
**Americas Division**

Dear Mr. Vivanco:

We are very glad that Human Rights Watch (HRW) is interested in getting involved in finding out more about many of the incidents and allegations around the Bajo Aguan conflict. We are especially pleased HRW is willing to listen to all parties involved to better understand such a complex problem.

As explained in my earlier e-mail, Mr. Facusse has delegated to me the responsibility for answering your request for information as stated in your letter dated October 3rd, 2013. We hope that the answers hereby provided, are sufficient for your purposes, but if you need additional information, feel free to ask.

**General questions on the functioning of security guards:**

We understand that Dinant may have as many as 300 armed security guards for its various operations. Could you describe how security is provided to Dinant’s operations, including the number of guards currently used by the company? Are these personnel employed directly by the company, or through a third party contractor, and for what purposes?

As closing of September 2013, Dinant (including its affiliated company Exportadora Del Atlantico) has 470 security guards for its various operations throughout the country, which includes manufacturing facilities, distribution centers, agricultural operations and corporate offices in Honduras.

Out of those 470 security personnel, 231 are Dinant’s direct employees (49%) and 239 are third party contracted (51%). The following is the purpose of those 470 contracted:

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470

Of the guards assigned to the field (plantations), specifically in the Aguan region, the number is 134 security guards for a total extension of 8,593.73 hectares, for an average of 64.13 hectares for every man, which means that every security guard covers an area equivalent to 641,300 square meters. For the Lean Valley, there is one man for every 128.01 hectares and for the Comayagua Valley is one man for every 95.39 hectares.
What measures, if any, does Corporación Dinant carry out to ensure that guards it employs or those employed by firms it hires have training to respect company policies, human rights standards and Honduran law in their security role?

As for Corporacion Dinant employees, like any other potential employee in any area of the company (sales, administration, human resources, production line worker) a selection process is followed in which the potential candidate prior to be hired has to submitted to several tests (psychological, aptitude, etc.), a background process ran by the Human Resources Department, which includes a formal review of the individual’s police record to determine if they have criminal or any other type of problem (credit, bad references, etc.). Also, the person is requested to submit along with the application, a criminal record card issued by the police who certify that this person has no public record of a criminal conviction.

The third party contractors are expected to follow the same procedures that Dinant follow with selection of its candidates.

As for training to respect company policies and standards in human rights and Honduran laws in their security role, Dinant is constantly providing its employees with proper training in that regards. Also, Dinant has asked that third parties such as International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide special training in Human Rights. As well, a specialist in Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights has been hired in order to develop an implementation program for the principles into all of our operations. This program will include not only our Dinant security personnel but also those of third parties contractors.

What measures, if any, does Corporación Dinant carry out to vet guards it employs or those employed by contractors on its behalf to ensure that they do not have criminal convictions?

As previously explained, during personnel selection a background check is performed and also a criminal record card issued by the police is required in order to obtain a job. We are considering additional vetting measures.

Do security guards employed by Corporación Dinant, or by contractors on its behalf, have powers to arrest or detain individuals, and if so, what is the source of that authority?

In general, guards do not have powers to arrest individuals. The only situation in which they can detain an individual is when a trespasser has illegally entered the private property of the company. In that case, the guards are responsible for safeguarding the personnel and property under their custody and may temporarily detain a suspect until the arrival of the proper authorities (police). Once police are on the scene the guards immediately turn over custody of the trespasser to them.

Under what legal authority are security guards employed by Corporación Dinant or by contractors on its behalf entitled to carry arms and what weapons are they permitted to carry?

The Ministry of Security is the one that authorizes security personnel to operate and the one that establish under which conditions these security personnel may operate. It is also the Ministry of Security that controls the issue of permits to carry weapons for any Honduran, whether that Honduran works for a security company or not.

In accordance with Honduran law and Dinant security policy, Dinant’s private security personnel ONLY carry shotguns and pistols and then ONLY when they are in the performance of their duties on Dinant property. The violent, armed threat to the security guards mandates they must be armed to protect themselves and the Dinant employees in the care. Dinant guards have been murdered in the past when unarmed and in transit to their work site.
Does Corporación Dinant maintain a register of weapons, including the names of the personnel to whom they are issued?
Yes, we do have a registry of weapons as well as to whom these weapons are assigned. The third parties contractors do so as well.

Does Corporación Dinant maintain a daily record of security guards working at its facilities?
Yes, the company keeps daily records of the security guards assigned to its facilities, just as it does with the rest of the employees in any type of assignment. The same applies for the third party contractors.

What are the most important security issues faced by private security personnel employed by Corporación Dinant?
In general, the more important issues are the common security conditions that affect the general population in the country, which includes criminal activities such as armed robberies, assaults, murders, etc.

In the Aguan Region in particular, starting in December 2009 a massive invasion of our Plantation sites took place which has taken several lives and caused many injuries. Despite the company’s efforts and the employees’ family’s efforts to get justice, nothing has been accomplished so far. The Honduran Government has not been able to successfully address the situation in accordance with the law.

What modes of lethal and non-lethal force are security personnel employed by Corporación Dinant or contractors on its behalf authorized to use when involved in confrontations? What legal standards and/or company-mandated rules of engagement govern the use of these weapons?
The general mandate by Dinant to all guards is to avoid all confrontations at any cost. Dinant Security personnel have been ordered not to confront illegal trespassers and should withdraw from the premises without firing their guns if possible. The use of deadly force is not allowed or suggested at any time, with one exception. The use of deadly force is permitted in self-defense or to protect the lives of Dinant employees which the guards are protecting. This is allowed by law. On rare occasions the guards have been forced to use their weapons in order to protect their lives. A copy of Dinant’s rules of engagement is stapled in every security post for the guards to have guidance. A copy of these rules is attached to this mail.

As part of the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, our company along with the consultant, are in the early stages of evaluating less-lethal security equipment and developing appropriate rules for the use of that equipment.

How does Corporación Dinant monitor the day-to-day conduct of its security guards and those employed by contractors on its behalf to ensure that they comply with human rights standards, legal requirements and company policies?
Our company, as well as our third party contractors, has supervisors that supervise and monitor the day to day conduct and operation of the security guards. These supervisors are obligated to report to the Corporate Offices the daily events and any incidents, as well as to plan the training and enforce proper behavior of the security personnel.

Has Corporación Dinant taken any measures to ensure that its security personnel and those employed by contractors on its behalf can report misconduct by others employees with adequate guarantees of confidentiality and without fear of reprisal?
As part of the company’s policies, a complaint box has been installed in all of Dinant’s facilities in order to ensure confidentiality in the event that an employee or one from a third party contractor wants to report an event, whether if that person wants to do it anonymously or with his (her) own name.
Those complaints are properly processed and discussed in accordance with the severity of such denounce. However, we are currently evaluating improvements in that process as well as the proper incorporation of the complaint box for processing community complaints. Furthermore, with the help of SNV, a well-known international external consultant company, we are also developing a much more formal structure for community engagement than the one the company had previously to the Aguan Conflict.

Does Corporación Dinant investigate every incident where security guards are alleged to have used force and/or acted inappropriately in carrying out their duties? How many such investigations were opened from 2009 through the present?

Whenever a case has been brought upon to our attention the company has always conducted an internal investigation. To date not a single case has been formally brought to our attention from external sources. The internal investigations have always derived from incidents in which our security personnel were assaulted by trespassers. These acts of violence were publicly brought to the attention of the Honduran authorities by our personnel.

What disciplinary measures are invoked in cases where Corporación Dinant or contracted security personnel are found to have used force without adequate justification or committed other abuses?

i. How frequently have such measures been invoked?

ii. How many investigations were closed due to lack of evidence?

iii. In how many investigations was the determination reached that no wrongdoing had occurred?

The only case in which we have found abuse from our security guards, they fled the scene and we were not able to invoke any type of measures. In any case, we communicated the event to the police and the Attorney’s office and cooperated in full with the investigation process. The case is discussed below.

Who is responsible for conducting Corporación Dinant’s investigations into allegations of criminal misconduct by security personnel? What steps are taken to ensure the independence and impartiality of said investigators?

The initial investigation is always conducted by the supervisor assigned to the site. If the allegation is credible, the supervisor immediately brings it to the attention of Dinant management for investigation by a person from the Human Resources Department, a person from the Legal department (if applicable) and the Operation Manager on site. In accordance with the severity of the facts, people from other departments, including Corporate Staff is included. This process has been explained in detail to all Dinant facility managers and site security supervisors and trained by our consultant using a practical exercise.

Do procedures exist to refer cases involving allegations of serious abuse by Corporación Dinant security personnel (including those employed by contractors on its behalf) to the police? If so, do those procedures include the handing over of the results of any internal investigation to the police? Have such procedures ever been invoked?

Our Voluntary Principles consultant has conducted extensive training for the Dinant management team in appropriate methods to do this. We are developing formal, written procedures to guide our employees and supervisors in handling allegations of misconduct or human rights abuse. Our security personnel have fully cooperated with the police or the judicial authorities in resolving past allegations. For example, after the incidents that took place in "El Tumbador" in November 2010, we encouraged our personnel (third party hired) to go to court and face trial.

Has Corporación Dinant taken any steps to align its policies and procedures with the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights? If so, please describe these.

Dinant has made the commitment at every level to implement policies that are consistent with the Voluntary Principles. Dinant management has signed and publicly released the company’s Human Rights Policy and posted this on the company website. In meetings with Honduran officials at all levels Dinant has shared copies of the Voluntary Principles and their Human Rights Policy and explained the corporation’s commitment and expectations. This effort establishes Dinant as the business leader in this effort in Honduras.
To further reinforce our efforts, the company has formed a Dinant Core Team at the corporate level to oversee the Voluntary Principles implementation program. Dinant hired an international subject matter expert to work with this Core Team over a several months, including two intensive training sessions in Honduras totaling four weeks of lectures, seminars and practical exercises. This core team will be the training cadre as Dinant disseminates and incorporates the Voluntary Principles in its core business culture.

During the two training phases, Dinant gathered over thirty of its senior Honduran management team members at off-site locations for intensive training in the program translated into Spanish. In total, the training commitment amounted to almost 200 man-days for Dinant senior and mid-level management. The participants received training in the fundamentals of the Voluntary Principles, effective methods to engage stakeholders and techniques to assess risks and develop mitigation measures that respect human rights.

Dinant is actively engaging with a respected NGO member of the Voluntary Principles Plenum to further expand our knowledge of and find best practices in the implementing the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights. We have met with and explained our Voluntary Principles program to the United Nations Special Representatives for Human Rights and to the National Human Rights Commission.

Dinant’s program to implement the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights is a ground-breaking initiative in Honduras and in the agribusiness sector. It is already an example for other peer companies to emulate.

The IFC Review:
We understand that sometime in or after 2010, the IFC helped Dinant identify a consultant to review the company’s security and human rights policies and procedures, in order to be consistent with IFC’s performance standards and industry standards such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. The consultant was also supposed to train security personnel. Can you detail that cooperation and those efforts, including who was hired, what was their scope of work, and when that occurred?
As a result of the conflicts in the Aguan Valley, IFC recommended that Dinant hire a security and human rights expert to ensure that our policies, procedures and training are in line with the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. Our aim is to avoid further conflict and to protect the lives and welfare of local residents and employees.

The security and human rights consultant, Don McFetridge, has more than a dozen years of experience monitoring and assessing security programs in conflict zones, introducing the voluntary principles as a tool for managing security and community relations, and helping companies integrate them into all levels of their operations. He was the primary author of the World Bank (MIGA) working paper, “The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. An Implementation Toolkit for Major Project Sites”. Over the last two years, the consultant has made multiple visits to Honduras, working with Dinant management at all levels to train them in the fundamentals of the Voluntary Principles and help develop policies, procedures and techniques to make Dinant one of the first corporations outside the extractive industries to roll-out an effective program.

These efforts are supported and reinforced by additional, respected international consultants working with Dinant on community engagement and associated issues.
We understand that the IFC’s Compliance Advisor and Ombudsman ordered an audit of the project in April 2012. What is the status of the IFC review and can you describe the company’s views on this process? The Compliance Advisor and Ombudsman’s website includes information on the scope of the audit. http://www.cao-ombudsman.org/documents/CAOcommuniqueDinant_February2013.pdf

We recommend contacting IFC for more information on the status of the report.

As for Dinant, the company has fully cooperated with the audit process. We were interviewed by the CAO panel during a teleconference in early 2013 during which we discussed many of the aspects involving the Aguan conflict.

What efforts did Dinant or IFC make to assess social or human rights impacts of the company’s operations prior to obtaining the loan or afterwards?
IFC carried out an environmental and social appraisal as per its procedures and 2006 Performance Standards, which guide clients’ requirements for investment. IFC’s Environmental and Social Review Summary was disclosed in Nov. 2008: http://ifcext.ifc.org/ifcext/spiwebsite1.nsf/78e3b305216fcd8a85257a8b0075079d/0da97ae6a7a3981f852576ba000e2ccf?opendocument

Since then, IFC has worked with Dinant to monitor progress on the action plan.

Could you provide the social and environmental assessment as well as any other materials that pertain to human rights policies and procedures?
Environmental and Social Impact Assessments are not required by IFC unless there is a new development or the expansion of a project. Since the IFC investment did not involve either, it was not required.

Dinant did publicly disclose a Spanish summary of IFC’s Environmental and Social Review Summary in the offices of the local city halls in which the company had impact and also published in a newspaper that it was going to do so.

Attached you’ll find Dinant’s Human Rights policy, which is published on our webpage www.dinant.com.

We understand that then-IFC vice president, Lars Thunell, met with President Porfirio Lobo of Honduras to discuss allegations of abuse relating to Corporación Dinant. Can you provide further details on any discussions you had with Thunell or the office of the president in relation to this meeting?
Dinant did not participate in the meeting you reference. Our understanding from local media reports is that Mr. Thunell met with President Lobo as part of his visit to Honduras and discussed the country’s security situation. We suggest you contact IFC for further details.

Questions Regarding Specific Cases in Bajo Aguán:
Deaths of Five Individuals, El Tumbador Plantation, November 15, 2010.
On November 15, 2010, a group of peasants from the Movimiento Campesino del Aguán (Peasant Movement of the Aguán, or MCA), a land claims group, approached the El Tumbador plantation, where guards employed by Corporación Dinant were allegedly stationed.

The initial police report into the incident said that “a confrontation with firearms between a group of peasants and security guards” had occurred that took the lives of five campesinos: Teodoro Acosta, Raul Castillo, Ciríaco de Jesús Muñoz Aguilar, Ignacio Reyes and José Luis Salcedo Pastrana.
Can you confirm that Corporación Dinant owned, operated or otherwise controlled the Tumbador plantation in November 2010?
In fact, our affiliated company Exportadora Del Atlantico owned and operated “Tumbador” Plantation in November 2010, and has been doing since it bought the site from the previous owners back in 1999.

Were the security guards who were on duty at the time direct employees of Corporación Dinant, or employees of a private security contractor employed by Corporación Dinant?
The security guards present at the site were employees of the third party contractor; the Company name is “Orion Seguridad”.

Does Corporación Dinant believe the initial police report was accurate in concluding that five campesinos were killed in an exchange of gunfire with security personnel employed by the company?
We do not believe that the 5 trespassers were killed from fire coming from our security guards, since the bodies struck by bullets from high caliber weapons which are illegal in Honduras. The security guards are only allowed to carry 12” shotguns or revolvers. The people who were carrying high caliber weapons were the trespassers; therefore we agree that deaths resulted from exchange of fire but do not agree that this fire came from our security personnel.

This is not only our belief but the findings of the court of law that handled the case of the security guards and acquitted them of all the charges.

Please provide a detailed account of Corporación Dinant’s understanding of how the incident described above unfolded.
The events unfolded as follows: In November 2010, a group of about 160 people arrived at the El Tumbador plantation. They were heavily armed with illegal assault weapons such as AK-47’s. The local press carried photos of the trespassers that clearly show their assault weapons.

They approached our security guards and announced that the Minister of National Agrarian Institute (INA) has told them that the plantation land belonged to them and that all of the Exportadora’s workers in the field had five minutes to leave the premises. After only 3 minutes the trespassers opened fire upon our personnel and security guards, who repelled the attack. We would like to point out that the wounds of those killed were from high caliber weapons and not the light weapons assigned to the security personnel or any Dinant personnel on the premises. A copy of a newspaper article on the subject is attached includes statements from local police authorities in which they state that the newspaper people as well as the police were kidnapped by the trespassers.

Did Corporación Dinant conduct an internal review of the incident, including an examination of whether any security personnel involved in the incident behaved justifiably? If so, what were the results?
We did conduct such investigation and the main results are that:
1) The security guards did not have a chance to avoid the confrontation.
2) The security guards opened fire in order to safeguard their own lives and the lives of unarmed employees who were working in the field (field workers not related to security jobs).
3) The security guards immediately called for help from the authorities and from their security supervisor.
4) The security guards cooperated with the internal investigation as well as the police investigation.
Did Corporación Dinant contact the police or other authorities to provide them with information on the incident? If so, can you describe that process?
Immediately after the event the police authorities were contacted by phone and notified of the event. Almost at the same time, a legal complaint of the trespassing event was delivered to the local Public’s Attorney’s Office by our lawyer, which included a brief description of the incident.

The police are obligated to act upon our criminal complaint. The Attorney’s office is also obligated to act by default since a violent act occurred which resulted in the death of people. Despite, the fact that Dinant has formally filed a legal complaint there has been no action by the authorities.

Did police investigators or prosecutors interview Corporación Dinant officials, employees or contracted personnel about the incident, and did Corporación Dinant cooperate fully with their investigation?
The police, as well as personnel from the Public Attorney’s office, came to the scene and interviewed the people on the site, including not only the security guards but also the field workers.

All of our personnel cooperated fully with the investigation, including when they were requested by the court to appear. They showed up at the trial, submitted to the whole process and were acquitted.

Did Corporación Dinant supply police with lists of weapons provided to guards on and off duty at the time of the incident?
The weapons at the scene were surrendered to police authorities. No list of weapons from other sites or from off-duty personnel was requested by the police or the Public Attorney’s Office.

Did Corporación Dinant supply police with the names of guards on duty at the time of the incident?
Yes.

Disappearance and Killing of Gregorio Chávez, July 2, 2012:
Chávez disappeared near his home on July 2, 2012. According to police and Chávez’s family, his body was found buried inside Paso Aguán plantation on July 6, 2012.

Did Corporación Dinant own, operate or otherwise control the Paso Aguán plantation in July 2012?
Our affiliated Company Exportadora del Atlántico owned and operated the Paso Aguán Plantation at the beginning of July 2012 and lost control of it for more than a year.

In the early days of July 2012, a group of people accompanied with police authorities along with Public Attorney’s representatives came to the Paso Aguán plantation asking our security guards to allow them to enter the premises because they were looking for a missing person (Gregorio Chavez). Our personnel allowed the authorities to enter the premises; the authorities later asked the guards to leave the area; with the guards gone the property was invaded by a group of people, under the excuse that they were looking for Mr. Chavez’ body. During a short period (a couple of days), the trespassers stole the fruit, stole 3 tractors (of which up to this date only 1 appeared) and burned a warehouse-office. After our company made a public complaint about these events, the trespassers voluntary left the plantation site. Subsequently the body was found buried on the premises.
Does Corporación Dinant believe it to be accurate that Chavez’s body was discovered on the plantation?
Yes, the body was found on the plantation site.

Does Corporación Dinant have a position on how Gregorio Chavez was killed, and/or on how his body allegedly came to be discovered on the plantation?
We do not believe the body was there while the plantation was in our control. We believe Mr. Chavez was killed elsewhere and the body was moved from a different location to the plantation and buried while we had no control of the plantation site.

After the trespassers left the premises, the body was found. We cooperated in full with the authorities in the investigation process. The forensic report has not yet been placed at public disposal; therefore, it is not possible to prove our position or assumptions.

Did the corporation carry out an internal investigation into the case? If so, what were the results?
Yes, an internal investigation was carried and the major findings were:
1) There were no previous indications that may lead to the conclusion that any employee of the company had any dispute with Mr. Gregorio Chavez, who had been a neighbor for more than a decade.
2) There were no indications that a body was buried into the plantation site. Neither our security personnel on their rounds at the plantation site, nor the technical personnel and field workers who work on the plantation saw any indication of a burial or grave during the time we were in possession of the plantation.

If the corporation did carry out an investigation, did it turn over its findings to government officials?
No, we did not share that internal investigation, but as previously explained we cooperated in full with the authorities, sharing our conclusions, allowing access to the site and to our employees.

Did Corporación Dinant contact the police or other authorities to provide them with information on the incident? If so, can you describe that process?
Explained in the previous questions.

Did police or prosecutors interview employees or guards on the Paso Aguán plantation after Chávez went missing and/or after the body was discovered, and did Corporación Dinant cooperate fully with their investigation?
Yes, as previously explained.

Attached you’ll find public statement released to radios and TV stations in regards to the disappearance of Gregorio Chavez.

Disappearance and Killing of José Antonio López Lara, April 29, 2012
López Lara went missing on April 29, 2012, his daughter told Human Rights Watch. In April 2013, a body was found on Paso Aguán plantation that López Lara’s wife says is that of her husband. Authorities have not yet confirmed whether the body is López Lara’s.

Did Corporación Dinant own, operate or otherwise control the plantation between April 2012 and April 2013?
Our affiliated company Exportadora Del Atlántico, lost control of Paso Aguan Plantation on July 2012 and did not recover control of it until February 28th, 2013, for 6 days only until finally recovering control of the site on May 21st, 2013. We only operated and controlled the plantation between April 2012 and early days of July 2012 when the trespassers seized the land. We finally got control again on May 2013.
Does Corporación Dinant have any understanding as to how the person whose body was allegedly found on Paso Aguán plantation died, and/or how his body came to be on the plantation?
We do not have any understanding of the situation in relation to that body, nor were we aware of the disappearance of Mr. Lopez Lara in 2012. The only involvement we have after the body was found were public statements in media appearances asking the authorities to come to the scene and conduct a proper investigation.

Does Corporación Dinant have an opinion as to whether the body allegedly found on Paso Aguán plantation was that of Lopez Lara?
None, but we wish to emphasize:
• The fact that we had nothing to do with the situation.
• We had no dispute with Mr. Lara.
• We did not have control of the plantation for many months.
• Our public statements asking the authorities to conduct a full investigation on the matter.

Did Corporación Dinant carry out an internal investigation into the incident described above? If so, what were the results?
We did not, since we did not have access to the site. Nor did we have any knowledge of the disappearance in 2012.

Did Corporación Dinant contact the police or other authorities to provide them with information on the incident? If so, can you describe that process?
We did not contact the police, since we were not in possession of the Plantation Site. However; we publicly stated our willingness to cooperate with authorities in the investigation as well as encourage them to investigate this incident.

Have police or prosecutors interviewed employees of the corporation or its security guards on the Paso Aguán plantation, either since April 2013 when the body was discovered, or in the time after López Lara went missing in April 2012? If so, did Corporación Dinant cooperate fully with their investigation?
We were not contacted by authorities nor did we conduct any internal investigation.

Disappearance of Francisco Pascual López, May 15, 2011
López went missing on May 15, 2011, while grazing cattle. A member of the peasant organization to which López belonged told Human Rights Watch that on the day López went missing, a trail of blood led from where he was last seen onto the property of the Panamá plantation ten meters away.

Did Corporación Dinant own, operate or otherwise control the Panamá plantation in May 2011?
Our affiliated company Exportadora del Atlántico owned and operated the Paso Aguan Plantation in May 2011, also known by some people as the Panama Plantation.

Was Corporación Dinant aware of allegations that a trail of blood led onto the plantation? Does it believe these allegations to be credible?
We were not aware of these allegations, nor were we asked to investigate this case.

Did the corporation carry out an internal investigation into the case? If so, what were the results? Did Corporación Dinant contact the police or other authorities to provide them with information on the incident? If so, can you describe that process?
No, for the reasons stated above.
Since López went missing, have police or prosecutors interviewed employees of the corporation, its security guards (or those employed by contractors on its behalf) regarding his disappearance? If so, did Corporación Dinant cooperate fully with their investigation?

No authorities have ever contact us in regards to this case, but we will readily cooperate with any investigation by proper authorities.

Killing of Four Dinant Security Guards and a Laborer Employed by Dinant, August 14, 2011

Four Dinant employees—Marco Antonio Guillen, José Darling Guzman, José de Jesus García Flores, and José Alfredo Aguilar—and farmworker Ramón Lobo, were killed in an armed confrontation at Paso Aguán.

Does Corporación Dinant have any information regarding the nature of the confrontation that resulted in the five men’s deaths, or the identity of their assailants?

On August 14th, 2011, at approximately 6:00 AM during the security guards shift change, a violent forceful attempt to take possession of the Paso Aguán Plantation took place. This was carried out by a large group of people, presumably arriving from the Panama Community, who entered the premises opening fire at the guards with illegal heavy weapons that included AK-47s.

The event resulted in the death of 1 of the trespassers, 4 security guards of which at least one showed signs of being executed while facing the floor unarmed. Also, a Field Technician who was working at the field, was captured, tortured and executed. His ears were cut off and according to witness accounts they heard the executioners shout they were going to send the ears to Mr. Facusse.

Also 11 security guards were wounded from the fire coming from the trespassers’ weapons.

Always when an event like this takes place, as soon as possible, a phone call to police authorities is made asking for support. Whenever there are victims (whether dead or wounded), the police are obligated to respond to the scene accompanied by the Attorney General’s office representative. At the same time our lawyer went to the Attorney General’s office to present a formal, legal complaint of the event as well as denounce the violent events that took place. If any of the trespassers is identify by witnesses, the name of that trespasser is placed on the complaint. Therefore, the authorities should at least be able to identify someone at the scene who participated in the violent events, question them, and be able to determine if the accused participated in the violent acts or just participated in the trespassing felony.

We followed the above mentioned procedure.

Did Corporación Dinant carry out its own internal investigation into this incident? If so, what were the results? Did the company turn over its findings to police or other authorities to provide them with information on the incident?

Yes we did. The main findings concluded:

1. That some of the leaders of the violent event were part of the MUCA peasant movement.
2. This was a calculated act that was carried out during the guard shift change.
3. Even though the timing of the attack meant that more guards would be present (two shifts, the one leaving the shift and the one entering the shift), the limited number of guns at the disposal of the guards would be the same. This meant that the assailants could cause more victims.
4. The movement that wanted to take possession of the Plantation not only included people from the Panama Community, but also other outsiders from the Muca peasant movement and from a well-known criminal gang from the area.
As far as Corporación Dinant is aware, did police or prosecutors interview any suspects in these killings? We are not aware that Police or any authorities have interrogated anyone (from the ‘Trespassers’ side) associated with the events.

Did Corporación Dinant contact the police or other authorities to provide them with information about the incident? If so, can you describe that process? Yes, as previously explained.

Since the time of the incident, have police or prosecutors interviewed employees of the corporation or its security guards? If so, did Corporación Dinant cooperate fully with their investigation? There has not been any follow up interviews by any authorities after the day of the events that we are aware of.

To the corporation’s knowledge, what is the current status of the criminal investigation into the killings? This remains an open case.

Additional Investigations
Is Corporación Dinant aware of any other cases or official investigations in which its security guards or guards employed by contractors on its behalf were involved or alleged to have been involved in perpetrating serious crimes such as killings, disappearances, or other violence in Bajo Aguán?
No, we are not aware of any other investigation or case in relation to our security in Bajo Aguán.

However, we did have one serious incident outside the Bajo Aguán Region. At a location known as Plan de Flores (about 2 hours drive from Tocoa), some trespassers ran into some Dinant security guards. In this incident there was an exchange of gunfire that resulted in one of our security guards being injured. The incident took place after midnight and the guards called the supervisor who was not in the area. As soon as the sun came up, the supervisor notified the police and Attorney’s office authorities and took them to the scene. For reasons yet unknown to us, the guards had executed the trespassers and fled the scene. Immediately, the security supervisor was place into the authorities’ custody as well as the scene of the crime. The authorities received full cooperation from the company for the investigation. The security supervisor went into court and was acquitted. The guards are still large.

While Dinant was not responsible for this criminal act, the company approached the victims’ families and made a settlement on humanitarian grounds.

This criminal action was against Dinant’s policy and was not planned, ordered or suggested by anyone in Dinant.

Is Corporación Dinant aware of other cases or official investigations into incidents in which Dinant employees or security personnel working for Dinant contractors are alleged to have been victims of serious crimes such as killings, disappearances, or other violence in Bajo Aguán?
We have publically denounced other cases in which our security personnel have been violently assaulted in circumstances in which one can only conclude are related the conflict and the perpetrators are associated with the peasant movement or in association with common criminals.

Examples:
- On May 26th, 2013; while driving to the Paso Aguan Plantation a car with unarmed security guards heading to the guard shift was ambushed, with the result of 1 security guard killed and 4 wounded; our conclusion is that the guards were targeted because the attackers knew they could not carry their weapons off Dinant’s property. The weapons used were high velocity assault weapons like those used by the trespassers in earlier attacks.
Also this year, one of our lawyers in the Bajo Aguan region was assassinated while another was wounded during an armed attack in Tocoa. This happened only a few days after a press conference in which members from the MARCA & MUCA peasant movements, as well as members from Via Campesina, publicly stated that if their people at San Isidro Plantation (that MARCA had possession) were evicted, there would be a blood bath. Our company got the court eviction order and repossessed our property; as they threatened, a bloody event then happened.

Please provide as much specific detail as possible about any such cases as well as answers to the following questions, where applicable:

Has Corporación Dinant contacted the police, prosecutors, or other authorities to provide them with information on any of the alleged incidents? If so, can you describe that process?
Yes, we contacted them repeatedly in order to find out about any progress in the investigations of the violent incidents that took place every time the trespassers invaded our plantation. Eventually, seeing no progress was made by the authorities, we gave up our efforts.

Has Corporación Dinant cooperated fully with all such criminal investigations, if any are open?
Whenever we have been asked to cooperate with authorities we have done so. Our public statements to Honduran Government authorities have always been directed in terms of respect to the laws by all parties. We desire to cooperate with all investigations and hope the proper authorities will continue those investigations.

How many of those investigations have led to suspects being charged, and how many of those cases have resulted in criminal convictions?
The only investigations that lead suspects to court were the ones against our security guards in “El Tumbador” case and the one against our security supervisor in “Plan de Flores” case. Those trials resulted in acquittal of those brought to court.

On the other hand, in spite the fact that the authorities had the names of people who were part of the trespassing felonies cases against our properties, including those cases that resulted in our employees getting killed or wounded, not a single case has been brought to court.

In the view of Corporación Dinant, in those cases have police and public prosecutors fulfilled their responsibilities to thoroughly and promptly investigate violent crimes? If not, in what ways have they failed to fulfill these responsibilities?
We believe that the actions by peasant associations were and are illegal, but even when there was ample evidence no criminal prosecution has occurred so far. Where our employees have been victims there has been no justice and the prosecutors have not fulfilled their duties.

Furthermore, some months ago ex-members from the Peasant Movement (MUCA) deserted from the movement and appeared publicly, as protected witnesses from the Public’s Attorney office (since they have testified before its office). In those public appearances on TV, radio and in the newspapers they publicly stated that many of the deaths that have been wrongly attributed to our company’s employees and owners were actually carried out by leaders of the MUCA movement. These witnesses have even given the names of the people responsible for giving the orders to assassinate their partners in the peasant movement. So far, we are not aware that any investigation has been carried out to get to the bottom of such terrible crimes in which the witnesses publicly stated they were willing to go to court to prove their accusations.
Dinant is a company that has been in business for more than 50 years. We have agricultural operations in several sites such as: Aguan Valley, Lean Valley and Comayagua Valley in Honduras; Nandaime in Nicaragua and Cartago in Costa Rica. We also operate several factories in different locations in Honduras such as: Comayagua (2 factories), San Pedro Sula (1 factory), Choloma (1 Factory), Lean Valley (1 factory) and Aguan Valley (2 factories). In the long company’s history we never have a similar situation such as the one we are confronting in Aguan, nor are we confronting a similar situation in any other site but Aguan, specifically in relation to the Plantation sites.

Although we have no connection to the origin on the conflict, we have been dragged into it. Therefore, our company has from the very start of the conflict been willing to be part of the solution of it. Accordingly, Mr. Facusse agreed to sell 3,000 hectares to the Peasant Movement (MUCA) as a response to a personal request from the Honduran President (Mr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa). The land sale agreement, which eventually included almost 4,000 hectares, was sold at less than half the real price according to appraisals performed by qualified national and international experts. The decision to sell the land at the very beginning of the problem (February 2010) shows the company’s willingness to work for a quick and peaceful resolution. Sadly this has not happened.

Our company, its owner, employees, etc. have always publicly made a strong stand for a peaceful and final resolution of the conflict, with respect for the lives of all individuals and respecting the law. We have also publicly stated our readiness to collaborate with any authority in any investigation process that may derive from any of the actions that occurred in the Aguan region or any part of the country.

Dinant has had a long and public history of trying to work with the government and civic organizations in order to find a solution to the problems of land invasions, deaths and insecurity in the Bajo Aguan region. Among these efforts, Dinant, as previously referred, agreed to sell lands at below market prices as a goodwill gesture to the government and to peasant organizations, with the understanding that this could contribute to restoring peace to families and communities in the region, as well as throughout the country. Unfortunately, the desired result was not achieved since armed groups have since continued to terrorize those same communities and have encouraged the illegal seizure of private lands that provide jobs and wages for members of those same communities. Dinant, its executives and employees remain committed to contributing in any way possible to finding a long-term solution to this conflict.

In Dinant, we are committed to participate in actions that promote progress and harmony in the areas where we operate. Therefore, we develop projects that generate economic, social and environmental development through community engagement and inclusion, respecting human rights and ensuring safety and occupational health for our collaborators.

To ensure that our actions are consistent with international practices, we have adhered to the development and implementation of an Environmental and Social Action Plan, which was suggested by one of our international creditors, and which is currently being implemented. During 2013 we made significant progress and we expect to fully complete it by the end of 2014.

One of the major actions that the company has started as part of this plan is the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, which were discussed above in this letter. Some of the other relevant aspects are summarized as follow:

Community engagement
- The inclusion of ethnic communities on Dinant’s production chain through sustainable harvesting of Corozo palm nut has increased the income for minority ethnic communities such as Pech, Garifuna and Ladino, up to 70% and consequently contributed to the creation of a source of income for families in rural areas who are unemployed.
Dinant offers training and technical assistance to independent producers, increasing production and profitability of African palm plantations in more than 22,000 hectares. These producers are organized by family groups, whose land tenure qualifies mostly as small farmers. This contributes to the improvement in their quality of life.

Dinant has developed community projects in consensus with leaders of communities by providing technical and financial support for rural electrification, maintenance of roads, access to water, among other things.

Dinant will be expanding its work in communities through a socio-economic survey so we will have a better understanding of the issues affecting them. We will report our strategy for corporate social responsibility.

Dinant has donated over 1,000 hectares of land, providing free title deeds to people living in communities where the company has operations.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- Since 1997, Dinant has supported the hiring of 11 teachers to provide elementary and high school education in the communities of Leán and Aguán valleys, providing direct education benefits for 300 children.
- We have provided our employees and people from some of the local communities where our company operates with approximately 8,000 free medical consultations per year in northern Honduras (San Pedro Sula, Leán and Aguán Valley). Since 1998, Dinant has supported three health clinics, recruited of doctors and nurses, and provided essential medicines.
- Dinant is committed to wildlife conservation. We are working on the breeding, rearing and release of endangered species such as the red macaw, tapir, white tailed deer, iguana and jaguar. In the same way, we protect over 7,200 hectares of forest in 4 protected areas in Honduras.

As you may be able to evaluate, Dinant is a complex business, with a long history of over 50 years of operations. It is a company that is currently generating almost 8,000 direct jobs in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic.

Some information is attached to this letter, but there is a lot of additional information which we referred to, such as the formal legal complaints presented to the General Attorney’s office, eviction orders, etc. that are large documents. We will be glad to share these documents with you in our offices if you wish to look at these documents. Also, we would be delighted to receive a visit from your representatives and take you on a visit to our different sites in order for you to see first-hand what Dinant is really about and the positive impact that our company and its people contribute to the Honduran economy and growth. We look forward for your comments,

Cordially,

[Signature]

Roger Pineda Pinel
Corporate and Banking Relations Director

Cc: Miguel Facusse (Executive President), Miguel Mauricio Facusse (Executive Vice-president), File.
De: Gerencia del departamento de seguridad del Aguan.

Para: Personal de guardias corporativos y guardias privados.

Por disposición de la gerencia del Departamento de Seguridad perteneciente a la Corporación Dinant para un mejor desempeño en sus labores cotidianas se han girado las siguientes instrucciones, qué cada uno de los guardias que están bajo la ordenanza TENDRAN que cumplir y hacer cumplir tales disposiciones. Él no acatamiento de alguna de las instrucciones, el departamento de seguridad se vera obligado a imponer una sanción disciplinaria o en su caso a su despido inmediato.

**NORMAS DE CONDUCTA EN SU PUESTO DE TRABAJO.**

1.-Usar el uniforme correctamente, con su carnet y su corte reglamentario de cabello.
2.-No abandonar su puesto sin ser relevado en debida forma.
3.-Revisar su arma de asignación, reportar inmediatamente cualquier novedad en su arma de reglamento, no mantener cargada su arma, y no jugar y no apuntar en forma amenazante a ningún compañero-ni mucho menos con cualquier persona ajena al departamento de seguridad.
4.-Guardar siempre su postura como guardia de seguridad y no faltarte el respeto a trabajadores o no trabajadores, principalmente al personal femenino.
5.-Terminante prohibido hacer disparos, bajó ninguna circunstancia, si no ha reportado a los niveles superiores.
6.-No dormirse en servicio, reportar si padece de alguna enfermedad en su momento.
7.-Terminantemente prohibido ingerir bebidas alcohólicas o consumir algún estupefaciente (drogas).
8.-Terminante prohibido llevar mujeres a su puesto de trabajo.
9.-No usar los bienes de la Empresa para su bienestar. (Carros, motos, etc.).
10.-No extraer absolutamente nada que no sea propio, mucho menos producto decomisado O material y equipo propiedad de la Empresa a la cual trabaja.

**DISPOSICIONES DE TRABAJO.**

1.-Llevar el libro de novedades, por cada finca.
2.-Cumplir en la mejor forma, la ordenanza de no permitir la vagancia de animales, mucho menos el pastoreo ilegal dentro de las fincas. Hablar con sus respectivos dueños y hacerles llegar la información con la mayor educación posible, en caso contrario reportar al técnico de finca o en su defecto al jefe de la seguridad.
3.-Reportar cualquier anomalía con la cerca, que gira alrededor de la finca.
4.-No permitir el robo de fruta a ningún nivel, si este es el caso inmediatamente reportar al jefe de la seguridad o en su defecto y según la circunstancia a la Policía o DNIC. Por ningún motivo se autoriza responder al robo con fuego-ni para intimidación, la orden es reportar...
5.- No permitir el ingreso de vehículos que sea su intención de; pesca, leña o simplemente a nada. Esto se da por las circunstancias vividas.

6.- No esta permitido que el guardia de algún tipo de autorización, si no esta autorizado.

7.- Acatar las disposiciones de los técnicos de fincas, dadas a los guardias siempre y cuando sea relacionado con la seguridad.

8.- Darle el uso apropiado al teléfono asignado y no utilizarlo para otras cosas.

9.- Reportarse con su jefe inmediato su ausencia de trabajo si es por enfermedad o asuntos personales.

10.- Reportar siempre cualquier anomalía que se observe ya sea dentro y fuera de su lugar de trabajo.

**REGLAMENTO A SEGUIR EN CASO DE AGRESION DE PARTE DE PERSONAS AJENAS A LOS INTERESE DE LA EMPRESA.**

1.- Si el caso fuera con personas dueñas, ganado y que quieren imponer el dicho que la costumbre hace ley, entonces tendrán que dialogar primero y hacer entrar en razón a la persona y si no es posible reportar vía teléfono al técnico, al jefe de la seguridad o en última instancia al apoderado legal de la Empresa.

2.- Si fuera el caso de INVASION ILÍCITA DE CAMPESINOS. En ningún momento será de responderles con fuego, si no que se tendrá que replegar y si se pudiera escuchar sus solicitudes en caso contrario salir del área y reportar al jefe de la seguridad, Policía Nacional, que serán estos últimos los tomarán el asunto en sus manos.

Si hubiera fuego indiscriminado hacia los guardias, tendrían que replegarse y buscar encubrimiento para esperar la Policía. Nunca será responder agresión por agresión, solo en última instancia y solo por defender su propia vida.

**TELEFONOS DE REFERENCIA.**

Teléfonos: Jefe de la Seguridad (3191-0319 /9780-0070); Bomberos (3399-4767); Policía (9981-4400);
Dgic (9885-4658) Abogado (3390-2225) Cruz Roja (3399-4714)

**PASOS A SEGUIR EN MOMENTO QUE SE IDENTIFIQUE UNA AMANZEA DE INVASION A UNA FINCA DE LA EMPRESA**

1. INFORMAR DE LA SITUACION .(cantidad de campesinos, armas que portan, y que solicitan)

2. REPORTAR AL JEFE DE SEGURIDAD DE LA AMENAZA (inmediatamente)

3. ALERTAR Y SOLICITAR APOYO A LAS AUTORIDADES POLICIALES DE LA ZONA(haciendo uso de los teléfonos descritos)

4. REPLEGAR (inmediatamente al hacer contacto visual y buscar cobertura y encubrimiento)

5. **SOLO RESPONDER AL FUEGO, SI HAY UNA AMENAZA CONTRA LA VIDA DEL PERSONAL DE SEGURIDAD Y SIEMPRE REPLEGARSE**

**CUMPLACE**
EXPORTADORA DEL ATLÁNTICO, S.A. DE C.V.

From: Security Department Management, Aguán.

To: Personnel from corporate and private guards.

By order of Dinant’s management’ Security Department, the following instructions have been given for a better performance in the daily work: every guard under the ordinance WILL HAVE to comply and enforce such dispositions. Non-compliance of any instruction, will force the security department to impose a penalty or according to the case, an immediate dismissal.

RULES OF CONDUCT IN WORKPLACE

1. Use the uniform properly, with your identification and regulatory haircut.
2. Do not leave post without being relieved in due formality.
3. Check your weapon assignment, immediately report any new developments on your regulatory weapon. Do not keep your gun loaded and do not play or aim in a threatening manner to any coworker or individual outside the Security department.
4. Always keep your position as a security guard and do not disrespect your coworkers or individuals, especially the female staff.
5. It is strictly forbidden to fire your weapons under any circumstances if higher levels have not been reported.
6. Do not sleep while in service, report if you have any illness at the time.
7. It is strictly forbidden to consume alcoholic beverages or any intoxicant substances (drugs).
8. It is strictly forbidden to invite women to your work’s post.
9. Do not use the Company’s assets for your welfare (cars, bikes, etc.)
10. Do not remove from the Company’s premises anything that is not yours, seized products or materials, and equipment owned by the Company.

DISPOSITIONS FOR WORK

1. Keep a logbook for every farm.
2. Comply in the best manner, the ordinance of not allowing illegal grazing and animals to idle within the farms. Talk to their respective owners and inform them with the highest respect possible. Or else, report to the technical personnel from the farm or the chief of Security.
3. Report any irregularity with the fence that surrounds the farm.
4. Do not allow fruit theft at any level. If this is the case, report immediately to the chief of Security or according to circumstances to the Police or the National Authority for Criminal Investigation (DNIC for its acronyms in Spanish). Under no circumstances a theft shall be answered with fire, not even for intimidation. The order is to report.
5. Do not allow the entry of vehicles when their intentions are for fishing, firewood or have no particular intention. This is given by previous experiences.
6. It is not allowed that guards give any kind of authorization, if not authorized by higher levels.
7. Comply with dispositions that the technical personnel give to guards, as long as it is related to security.
8. Give a proper use to the assigned phone and do not use it for other purposes.
9. Report to your immediate superior if your absence is health related or to attend personal matters.
10. Always report any irregularity observed within and outside the workplace.

REGULATION TO BE TAKEN IN CASE OF ASSAULT FROM PERSONS UNRELATED TO THE COMPANY’S INTERESTS

1. If the case were with people who own livestock and want to impose the saying that “custom becomes law”, then a dialogue will take place first to reason with the person and if not possible, report by telephone to the technical personnel, the chief of Security or ultimately to the Company’s legal representative.
2. If it were the case of UNLAWFUL INVASIONS OF PEASANTS. By no circumstance a response with fire will be permitted, but will have to retract, and if possible listen to their requests. Otherwise, leave the area and report to the chief of Security, National Police, which the latter will be the ones who take the matter in hands.

If indiscriminate firing at guards would take place, they would have to retract and seek cover to wait for Police. Aggression shall never be answered with aggression, unless, as a last resort, to defend their own life.

REFERENCE PHONEBOOK

Chief of Security: 3191-0319 / 9780-0070; Fire station: 3399-4767; Police: 9981-4400; DGIC: 9885-4658; Lawyer: 3390-2225; Red Cross: 3399-4717

STEPS TO FOLLOW AT THE TIME THAT A THREAT OF INVASION OF A COMPANY’S FARM IS IDENTIFIED

1. INFORM ABOUT THE SITUATION (Number of peasants, weapons that they carry, and their requests).
2. REPORT THE THREAT TO CHIEF OF SECURITY (immediately)
3. ALERT AND REQUEST SUPPORT TO POLICE AUTHORITIES OF THE AREA (using the phonebook previously described)
4. RETRACT (immediately on eye contact, and seek cover and concealment)
5. ONLY ANSWER TO FIRE IF THERE IS A THREAT AGAINST THE LIFE OF SECURITY PERSONNEL AND ALWAYS RETRACT

TO BE COMPLIED

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
Human Rights Policy

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to establish and maintain the framework for the implementation of human rights principles and the observance of human rights requirements in all aspects of our operations. The Policy is intended to ensure that all employees, contractors, and other parties with whom we do business recognize and respect human rights. The Policy is based on international human rights standards and is intended to guide our operations in all countries and jurisdictions in which we operate.

The primary objective of this Policy is to promote and protect human rights, including freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and to ensure that our operations respect and protect the human rights of all individuals.

All employees and contractors are required to comply with the Policy and to ensure that their activities are consistent with the principles of human rights.

The Policy applies to all aspects of our operations, including procurement, procurement of goods and services, and the performance of services.

Scope

The Policy applies to all employees and contractors, and to all operations conducted by the Company in all countries and jurisdictions.

Definition

Human rights: Rights that are inherent to all human beings, including freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and freedom from discrimination.

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Executive Vice President

Regis Ernesto Pineda Peralta

Vice President, Religions, Director

Regis Ernesto Pineda Peralta

II. Domination Republic

- E. Coah. Plane
- D. El Salvador
- C. Nicaragua
- B. Honduras
- A. Guatemala

1. Hostile through the Region for shareholders:

and without restriction. To do so, shareholders and employees may consult the Ethics Committee equipped

with an Ethics Department and employees are obliged to report any breach of the Human Rights Policy. Consequently,

VII. Compliance and coordination

Human Rights:

Any decision taken by the Management and the Committee in the area of influence to obtain training in the field of

VIII. Resolution and updating

The President and the Board of Directors must be responsible for approving the Human Rights Policy. In case of

IX. Resolution

Any decision or policy that is to affect human rights is subject to approval of the President and the Board. If the decision

is made in this manner, the decision will be communicated to the shareholders. If necessary, the shareholders will be informed

4. Specialization Box located on strategic points on the premises of Client.

2. Extension of hours or employees.

D. Vancouver 496-22

Comm. will establish a Community Grievance Mechanism on every site.
El subcomisario Alex Madrid asegura que los sujetos armados querían matar al fotógrafo de LA PRENSA

"HABÍA QUE RENDIRSE PARA EVITAR UNA TRAGEDIA"

La antigua delincuencia Alex Madrid, a pesar de años de carrera policial, dice el subcomisario que este incidente fue un día como otro cualquiera, pero aquel que marcó un hito en su carrera. Los detenidos eran los protagonistas de un entrelazado de hechos que, según cuenta Madrid, provocó un cambio de rumbo en su vida. A continuación, compartimos su relato:

Su experiencia sobre el incidente:
Madrid, originario de Santa Marta, empezó en la policía el 28 de septiembre de 1979. Durante toda su carrera, ha tenido que enfrentarse a situaciones como esta, lo que ha marcado su personalidad.

"Fue un día como los otros, pero aquel que marcó un hito en mi vida. Los detenidos eran los protagonistas de un entrelazado de hechos que, según cuenta Madrid, provocó un cambio de rumbo en su vida. A continuación, compartimos su relato:

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"Fue un día como los otros, pero aquel que marcó un hito en mi vida. Los detenidos eran los protagonistas de un entrelazado de hechos que, según cuenta Madrid, provocó un cambio de rumbo en su vida. A continuación, compartimos su relato:

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Bajo Aguan, HONDURAS

The deputy Alex Madrid, with an 18-year police career, was the man who bravely managed to control the group of armed subjects that for 30 minutes kept him hostage in El Tumbador farm for exchange to let go unharmed a photographer from La Prensa.

Although he lived 30 minutes of tension when he was held while the photographer ran dodging gunfire, he says that he never showed fear as he was confident that God was with him and that he would allow him to take control.

Madrid says it was difficult to convince the subjects that had a threatening posture and that carried illegal weapons such as AK-47s, shotguns and rifles.

His experience helped him

Madrid native of Santa Barbara entered the Police Academy in 1992. His work within the Preventive Police has been diverse.

He has served as the official of Santa Barbara Departmental Headquarters; he was also in public relations at Tegucigalpa and was assigned to the No. 1 Metropolitan Police in the areas of intelligence and information.

"As police officers, we are at constant risk and yesterday, I was in front of these people who are part of the town, and I felt fear, fear not for myself but for the life of the photographer. I rationalized so that they could be free. I just wanted the rest of the news crew to leave the area. The most important thing was their lives, I trusted in God," he said.

"I just wanted to help the team that since coming to Aguán has asked me to accompany them on their tour. My superiors authorized and I joined the journalist, photographer and the newspaper’s biker to penetrate the area.

We did not expect the attack; we did not imagine this, because we were came in good faith. Pretended not to enter their territory, we only sought for the photographer to have a good angle to capture images of the area" explained the police deputy.

Photographer: Target

Madrid says he will never forget everything that crossed his mind when he heard the shots and the screams of the subjects, some looked like peasants, and they said they would kill the photographer.

"When shooting happened, my first thought was that we had to surrender to avoid a tragedy. I stood firm and when two of the men suggested that they had to kill the photographer, I mediated with authority told the reporter to leave, to run and that I was going to stay to ensure that his life was not in danger," said Madrid.

"I listened, I shared ideas with them and identified myself as an officer, and I did not deny it. I explained the reasons that led us to the area and they asked me why I did not wear my complete uniform. For security reasons, I’ve left my uniform in the vehicle. They asked if I was armed and I said yes. There were no violent reactions, “I was a frank”, said the officer.

The experienced police stated that the situation in the area was not easy. That makes it clear that dialogue instead of acting is strongly recommended.

"At all costs you should avoid spilling the blood of more innocents. You cannot poison the heart of the common people. They cannot be manipulated, but should maintain respect for the rights and legal security of society because if not there will be no investment and sources of employment and that's worrying" he concluded.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
ATACO FUE CLARA AGRESIÓN A LA LIBERTAD DE PRENSA

El viceministro de Seguridad dijo que fotógrafo de LA PRENSA y policía fueron emboscados.

Afrentado a libre expresión.

Afirmó que se trata de un ataque a la libertad de expresión y que garantiza el ejercicio de los derechos fundamentales.

El diputado fue visible en la escena del crimen, donde se encontraba con otros funcionarios.

El fiscal acusó a un grupo de personas por el crimen, que fue capturado en video.

Todo el que esté armado será requerido.

El viceministro Armando Calderón señaló que la víctima fue víctima de una agresión en el barrio Agua Caliente, en la ciudad de Managua, donde fue atacado por varios individuos armados.

Desde este momento, el diputado fue llevado al hospital con heridas graves y está en observación.

El fiscal acusó a un grupo de personas por el crimen, que fue capturado en video.

En este momento, estamos en contacto con la policía para investigar el caso y darle el seguimiento necesario.

Armando Calderón
Viceministro de Seguridad
Attack was a clear assault on press freedom
Security Vice Minister said photographer from LA PRENSA and police officer were ambushed

Tegucigalpa, Honduras
The Government of the Republic through the Safety Department officially condemned and deplored the attack on members of the unit of investigation of LA PRENSA that were attacked Thursday by gunmen firing in El Tumbador farm, in Bajo Aguán.

“What happened on Thursday is a direct violation to LA PRENSA, we will continue to protect them, they have been very prudent and consistent in their investigations”, said Deputy Security Minister Armando Calidonio.

Terror in the Bajo Aguán

“Its time to bring order, to apply the law to all persons. At no time will we allow armed people to continue to cause turmoil in our country. The protection granted to members of LA PRENSA yesterday (Thursday) is to ensure they always do their job.

“They have full support of the National Police and we will talk with the Armed Forces because press freedom is respected here”, said overwhelmingly the Deputy Minister Calidonio.

Attack on freedom of speech
The Deputy Minister gave a press conference in which he said that the attack on this media is “a clear assault on press freedom”.

“We will be allies in this sense with every media in our country. We deeply regret the fright and difficult situation that happened yesterday to journalists and also the member of our Police; it is important to protect them as well” said Calidonio.

After the interview that the highest police authorities held with the commissioner who accompanied reporters of LA PRENSA near the conflict, Calidonio recounted the experience and the events occurring in the Aguán the previous Thursday.

“The photojournalist was approaching the commissioner Madrid, they were intimidated and the commissioner, on a technical maneuver of tranquility, from training, was able to negotiate peacefully with them (armed groups) to ensure the life of the photographer”.

We want to tell those people with those positions that we are already analyzing how to take away their guns, we have discussed the possible training here, but also people leaving here to be trained”, explained Calidonio.

The aspect of “peasant”
The story of the commissioner Madrid, issued by the Deputy Minister, provided details of the attack to the capital’s media.

“The commissioner was calming walking with the photographer when, without realizing, were practically ambushed by armed groups within these farms”, said Calidonio.

The deputy continued detailing that after they were ambushed, the photographer from LA PRENSA and the commissioner, the latter asked the young man to return.
“These armed people in the area of Bajo Aguán fired their arms near them in order for them to stand, that’s a completely clear and unacceptable aggression.

In that moment, the commissioner started to speak with them to assure the life of the journalists, this way they could abandon the area but they practically detained the commissioner for 30 minutes”, added the public official.

They ask for media support

An important point Calidonio made clear is that National Police has, at no time tried to attack armed groups.

"The Government of the Republic has been extremely prudent, patient and has had an extreme tolerance for the sole purpose of returning peace and tranquility to the area", he said.

What happened yesterday (Thursday) is a clear violation of the law, we care a lot about their lives, the photographer ran and they shot at him to make him stop. This is completely unacceptable.

We need the support of all media so that society can see what is happening in that zone and the training that Police receive to face such situations. They (members of LA PRENSA) got out surprised and worried from the place because the commissioner was virtually kidnapped by 30 minutes, its unacceptable.

Not only is a clear attack against LA PRENSA but against the journalistic profession and to the authority itself. It did not escalated because the Official could handle the situation, stay calm; but we are very concerned about what happened”, said Calidonio.

Everyone who is armed will be required

The Deputy Minister Armando Calidonio said that given the confirmation of the existence of groups with war weapons in Bajo Aguán, Tumbador Operation would be intensified.

“There is an agreement signed by the president, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, that there are 6 African palm plantations that are going to be delivered to peasant groups; the rest are going to be evicted in the coming days”, he said.

From this moment (yesterday), all people will be detained, no matter whether peasant, worker, entrepreneur, security guard, if they possess irregular weapons. If it is found that the weapon is illegal, a detention will be made, the arm seized and the Judiciary will apply full weight of the law that in these sense are nine years in prison”, said Calidonio.

The official also announced that they would enter the seized farms to make a revision alongside the peasants to ensure that there are no arms signaled as banned. Calidonio insisted that every person, no matter whom, will be arrested if using or having in possession a forbidden weapon and will be processed immediately. “In no other part of the country will we allow invasions in case you are thinking that when evicted from here you could go somewhere else”.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
EN RELACION A LA MUERTE DEL SEÑOR GREGORIO CHAVEZ

Por este medio Corporación Dinant/Exportadora del Atlántico, lamenta profundamente la muerte del Sr. Gregorio Chavez y negamos cualquier participación o relación a su desaparición y posterior muerte. No es, ni ha sido política de la empresa la eliminación de campesinos a pesar de las diferencias que en este momento pueda considerarse que mantenemos con algunos movimientos organizados.

Somos respetuosos del derecho a la vida de todos los individuos y de la misma forma hemos solicitado se le respete la vida a todos nuestros colaboradores.

Consideramos que existen las instancias legales para resolver las diferencias que pudieran darse con grupos organizados o particulares; de forma que no permitimos que las diferencias se solucionen violentamente.

En su momento, permitimos el acceso de las autoridades policiales y de la fiscalía a nuestros predios de forma que pudieran comprobar que no teníamos ninguna relación o nada que esconder con relación a la desaparición del Sr. Gregorio Chavez.

Lamentamos que existan individuos u organizaciones que quieren seguir provocando el caos en la zona y en el país, acusando a la empresa y sus empleados de acciones fuera de la ley y queriendo fomentar que Honduras no es un país de leyes.

Reiteramos a todas las autoridades nuestra mejor disposición para que puedan investigar todo lo relacionado a este caso.

Dado en la ciudad de Tegucigalpa, a los 06 días del mes de julio del 2012.

DIRECCION DE RELACIONES CORPORATIVAS
CORPORACION DINANT S.A DE C.V
PRESS RELEASE

REGARDING THE DEATH OF MR. GREGORIO CHAVEZ

Hereby, Corporacion Dinant/Exportadora del Atlantico deeply regrets the death of Mr. Gregorio Chavez and denies any involvement or connection with his disappearance and subsequent death. It is not, nor has been company policy to eliminate peasants despite the differences that can be considered that we have at this time with some organized peasant movements.

We respect the right to life of all individuals and we have requested that same respect of life for all our employees.

We believe that there are legal authorities to resolve disputes that may arise with organized or private groups; we do not allow disputes to be settled violently.

At the time, we allowed access to the police and prosecutors to our land so that they could see that we had no relationship and nothing to hide in relation to the disappearance of Mr. Gregorio Chavez.

We regret that there are individuals or organizations who want to continue causing chaos in the area and in the country, accusing the company and its employees of unlawful behavior and wanting to encourage Honduras as a country with no laws.

We reiterate our availability to all authorities to continue with the required investigations related to this case.

Tegucigalpa, July 6th 2012

Corporate Affairs Department
Corporacion Dinant S.A. de C. V.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
Arrecia conflicto en el Bajo Aguán

■ Saqueos, incendios y quemando bodegas a la Corporación Dinant

TOCÓC, Colón. El conflicto en el Bajo Aguán en las últimas horas por cuestiones de tierra proyecta en lo que podría ser un conflicto de laorganized pueblo alrededor de la cuestión de tierra en manos de negros, según los informes, que requieren la intervención de las fuerzas armadas.

Según el informe que tomó la Policía de la zona, el campesino Gregorio Cárdenas, de 60 años de edad, estuvo prohibiendo el paso de algunos negros que han comenzado a quemar algunas de las bodegas de la Corporación Dinant.

El joven acudieron con su familia y expandieron la insensibilidad de los pobladores de los municipios de Tolú y Cárdenas, a favor de los campesinos de las regiones del Bajo Aguán.

Además de los incendios, se denunciaron saqueos en los locales de la Corporación Dinant, donde se han encontrado armas y herramientas de trabajo.

En el lugar, las autoridades han implementado la realidad por los pobladores.

Este es un estado de violencia y terror en el que los campesinos no tienen protección y la tranquilidad.

En el Instituto de la Propiedad

Bomberos no hallan de donde salen gases tóxicos

Unos incidentes del Cuerpo de Bomberos inspeccionaron el edificio del Instituto de la Propiedad (IP). Durante el momento no se encontró ningún incidente de gas tóxico, informó el oficial Manuel Arturo, de la unidad.

Lo que encontramos es una presencia normal en el lugar y en el mismo, pero no se representa ningún problema para la sociedad. Dicha que los consumidos de ese tipo de medicamentos, no pueden aliviar los síntomas de los tanques, que no están en uso, ya que están almacenados en el lugar.

Este incidente es un caso de lo mismo, un incidente de gas tóxico en el que se encontró un incidente de gas tóxico, informó el oficial Manuel Arturo, de la unidad.

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El incendio se registró en el edificio del Instituto de la Propiedad (IP) en el municipio de Tolú, informó el oficial Manuel Arturo, de la unidad.

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Conflict Rages in Bajo Aguan

Tocoa, Colon. - The conflict in Bajo Aguan doesn’t seem to end, because for every problem that arises, it turns into a conflict between the farmers in the area against the guards who guard the farms.

According to the police report from the area, the farmer Gregorio Chavez (61 years old), disappeared on Monday night, so his fellowmen accused the security guards of being responsible and took "the hard way" the Paso Aguán Plantation, owned by Corporación Dinant.

Other farmers took the example and surrounded the Plantation and the village of Panama, in the jurisdiction of Trujillo, where they did not allow the entrance of any unit or personnel that had to do with Dinant Corporation.

It was so, that the law enforcement both Xatruch, Operacion Relampago and the police department, mounted an operation to restore order in the area, which allowed again the entry of the security guards, who had left the Plantation avoid confrontations and bloodshed.

Police reported that when the farmers had the Plantation in their power, they sacked the fruit and even burned a warehouse of the Dinant Corporation.

In big operations, police seized the palm fruit during the night patrols intercepting two vehicles carrying about eight tons of fruit, as reported by members under the command of Commissioner Jose Amilcar Mejia Rosales, of Colón.

In addition the burning of a warehouse was verified, which was described as an act of vandalism by the police chief. "They burned a warehouse owned by the Corporación Dinant, where fertilizers and tools were stored. The place was full of palm fruit everywhere".

With this action, this is the second warehouse that they have burned to Corporacion Dinant, the other one was in the area of Quebrada de Arena three years ago. The operations have been intensified across the sector, both by the police and by the army, to avoid clutter, said police chief since peace returned to the area, Mejia Rosales explained.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
Dinnat denuncia robo de fruta por disiplicencia de autoridades

Hacemos un llamado a las autoridades para que nos presten la debida colaboración y nos permitan seguir operando, afirma Roger Pineda, ejecutivo del grupo empresarial Dinnat.

TECUISCALPA

El representante del Grupo Dinnat, Roger Pineda, denunció ante la Policía Federal de Fronteras de la Ciudad de México (Policía Federal) el robo de fruta que ocurrió el 2 de julio de 2012 en la carretera federal Toluca-Jalisco.

El ejecutivo señaló que los delincuentes arrebataron 90 mil kilos de frutas de unos vehículos que estaban en el camino de vuelta de una de sus instalaciones.

Citan al director del Fondo Vial por sospechas en contrataciones

El director del Fondo Vial, Hugo Arístegui, fue citado ante la Corte de Contas por los presuntos delitos de corrupción e interferencia en las contrataciones.

TECUISCALPA

El director del Fondo Vial, Hugo Arístegui, fue citado ante la Corte de Contas por los presuntos delitos de corrupción e interferencia en las contrataciones.

Adquiera esta misma pág. en el diario Diario de Veracruz.
Dinant denounces palm fruit theft because of indifference of authorities
We call on the authorities for their collaboration and allow us to continue operating, says Roger Pineda, executive of the business group.

Dinant Group Treasurer Roger Pineda, denounced yesterday the theft of fruit and tractors on a farm in Aguan Valley after a road was taken by the peasants and they sought help from the police and military to help them protect their assets without being attended.

"A road that provides access to one of the farms was taken, this was carried out by people from the Panama Village, as the day went by since we could not access the property and safeguard our assets and the lives of our people, we asked for the cooperation of the police and military authorities of the area, over there as well as in Tegucigalpa. But the eviction never was carried out" said the executive.

"At the end of the day the situation was very heated, we were forced to lower off the fruit we had loaded on our trucks, which we were harvesting, the fruit was stolen during the night, roughly 200 thousand Lempiras, three tractors were also stolen, of which we understand one of them has been recovered today, they also set fire to one of the warehouses and the office within the plantation". He explained.

Pineda complained "We are not getting the support and it is difficult, extremely difficult to operate under such conditions as we are. Last week we were deprived of a farm, through a fraudulent trial between the same parties held by some former members of a cooperative and we were deprived of the ownership of a farm".

**Very Difficult to Continue Operating**

"Now we are in this situation in another farm, so we ask collaboration of the authorities and the government to allow us to continue working", explained the representative of the company to whom the State owes for the purchase of several farms that will be delivered to the peasants.

It is very difficult to continue operations under these conditions, the company has supported, it has given up 25% of its cultivated land with palm and still we are being subjected to abuses by organized groups, we definitely call on government authorities to provide the required collaboration to safeguard the assets of the company, the employees' lives and allow us to continue operating.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
REGRESAN LAS INVASIONES A FINCAS DEL BAJO AGUÁN

Aunque el Gobierno ha yacido el conflicto en el Bajo Aguán es, aparentemente, un caso resuelto, los hechos demuestran que nada está más alejado de la realidad que esta afirmación.

A pesar de la expulsión de tierras con que se han beneficiado varios labriegos, persisten los problemas en la zona ya que los desalojos y las invasiones de terrenos privados continúan, así como los hechos violentos y violaciones de derechos humanos.

En los últimos días, varios hechos de violencia han sido informados por la Policía, quienes han denunciado el desalojo de tierras y la intimidación de los campesinos.

Roger Pineda, director de la empresa Distant, ha denunciado que varios campesinos han sido desalojados de sus tierras y que han sufrido agresiones físicas.

CLAVES
1. Más de 50 campesinos en el Bajo Aguán han sido desalojados por los invasores.
2. Los hechos de violencia han sido registrados por la Policía.
3. Las 4,000 hectáreas de tierra que se están disputando son de gran importancia para la zona.

CIFRA
4. Mil familias del Bajo Aguán están afectadas por la invasión.

INVERSIONES
- El gobierno ha invertido 300 millones de dólares en la zona.
- Las inversiones han mejorado la calidad de vida de los habitantes.
- Sin embargo, los campesinos no han tenido beneficios a pesar de estas inversiones.

VÍCTIMA
- Gregorio Chávez, un campesino que ha sido victimizado por los invasores.

Para conocer
- Beneficios: La invasión ha beneficiado a los campesinos que han obtenido una finca.
- Intereses: Los campesinos tienen el derecho a trabajar en sus tierras.

Víctima
- Gregorio Chávez es de las víctimas más graves en el Bajo Aguán.

Esta semana tuvimos una situación grave en el Bajo Aguán, donde se enfrentaron campesinos a las fuerzas de seguridad. Las acciones han dejado varios heridos, pero también se han tomado medidas para prevenir futuros incidentes.

En estas circunstancias, es necesario que el Gobierno y las empresas se unan para buscar soluciones que beneficien a todos los habitantes de la zona.

Sobre los muertos
- Uno de los fallecidos es Gregorio Chávez, quien ha sido victimizado por una invasión.
- Otros fallecidos son dueños de tierras en el Bajo Aguán.

Este es un tema que debe ser tomado en serio por el Gobierno y las empresas que operan en la zona.

"Pérdidas podrían ser 300 millones"; Melara

Tegucigalpa: Unos 600 mil quintales de arroz se dejarán de producir en el presente año debido a la invasión de unos tres mil hectáreas de tierras pertenecientes a un ingenio.

"La falta de maquinaria y la falta de conocimientos técnicos hacen que sean más difíciles las inversiones en esta zona.

"La situación es crítica, pero también hay esperanza"; Melara

Es necesario que el Gobierno y las empresas trabajen juntos para encontrar soluciones que beneficien a todos los habitantes de la zona.
Farm invasion returning to Bajo Aguán

Peasants took yesterday the Paso Aguán property that is in full fruit production. Although the government has repeatedly said that the conflict in Bajo Aguán is practically a solved case, the facts show that nothing is further from the truth than this statement.

Despite the expropriation of land that have benefited many peasants, the problem in the area is not over and the invasions of private land continue, as well as the violence and violations of the law.

In recent days, two people, who were peasants, were violently killed, although police have not yet established whether the facts are related to the agrarian conflict.

Roger Pineda, Director of Corporate Affairs and Banking for Dinant, lamented the violence and said the situation in the area remains extremely complicated and that the land in full production continues to be invaded by peasant groups.

"In regards to the subject we have with government mediation, which was the sale of four thousand hectares to Muca (Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán), we are in the final steps of payment. We hope that in less than 15 days we will be paid. However; there has been an upsurge in invasions in Aguán because on Friday we were surprised that they executed an eviction order against the company, promoted by other peasant group named MARCA, in the San Isidro Farm.

They have made a fraudulent lawsuit, in which they sued among themselves and surprised the judicial authorities, who issued a ruling in favor of them ordering our eviction and canceling our title deed, but we were able to reverse that action in the Court of Appeals, although so far, we haven’t been able to evict the people who took the farm," said Pineda.

Invasions have not stopped

The Dinant executive explained that the recent deaths have nothing do with their company. "This week we had a situation in Panama village, which is adjacent to our Paso Aguán estate. These people said a man was missing and blamed our guards for it. They took a public road that allows access to the property; we asked the police for cooperation, but the peasants ended up trespassing into the farms and set a warehouse on fire, three tractors were stolen and also all the fruit, the next day they voluntarily vacated the property.

Then the next day the person who was missing was found into our property, but we issued a public statement that made it clear that we have no responsibility for this," said Pineda.

Despite the clarification, the farmers decided to take the property because of the death.

"They invaded the Paso Aguán Plantation, so we have; in addition to the four thousand hectares we decided to sell about 1,700 hectares taken away, divided into two farms.

One of the farms is the San Isidro, in which there are 784 hectares and the other one is Paso Aguán, that has 1,000 hectares, which were invaded today (yesterday ) by the Panama village people and we understand that in this group there are some participants from the left margin of the Muca people."

The palm oil companies in a statement considered it a dangerous precedent the way these groups deceived authorities who managed to obtain an eviction order.

"Ex cooperative members sued ex directors, claiming that the sale had been fraudulent". It is our understanding that ex-directors who participated in the trial said how it had been so and therefore they got an eviction order and canceled our title deed.

We didn’t even know about this. The sale that was discussed, it was of the sale of the cooperative San Isidro to us as Dinant. These people have already tried twice to annul the sale, but both times we have won” Dinant said in the letter.
Pineda, at the end, makes a public call on the government to act.

"There is an escalation in the invasions in Bajo Aguán. We believe there are people interested or organizations interested in creating chaos in the region and have no interest in resolving the situation and cause conflict. We ask the Government to carry the investigations and to take the necessary actions to put an end to this problem once for all".

**About the dead**
One of the dead was Gregorio Chavez (69), who went missing a few days and was found buried in a palm Plantation nearby.

Chavez was choked to death with a plastic bag, which was still covering his head. The other victim was Jacobo Lopez (30), who was attacked by strangers and shot as he left his house.

The perpetrators fled in a vehicle and the police no one has been captured for these 2 murders.

"It's unfortunate. We had already solved this problem, but we lost another two colleagues", said Vitalino Alvarez, spokesman for Muca.

**THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION**
Ataque en finca deja 5 muertos y 11 heridos

Cuatro de las víctimas eran guardias de seguridad y el otro, campesino.

Dolón

C uatro guardias de seguridad de la empresa de transporte de cargas "Dolón" fueron asaltados y matados en la finca "Cerro Colorado" en el municipio de Atitrío, en las cercanías de Tocoy y Trujillo. Los guardias, que eran habitantes de la comunidad de Tocoy, fueron identificados como如下:

- Héctor Álvarez
- Manuel Martínez
- José María González
- Juan Carlos García

Los familiares de los presuntos asesinos han asegurado que la empresa "Dolón" ha tenido problemas con los guardias de seguridad de otras empresas que operan en la zona.

El incidente ocurrió a las 6:00 de la mañana, cuando los guardias de "Dolón" fueron interceptados por un grupo de pandilleros armados y conducidos a la finca "Cerro Colorado". Después de un tiroteo, los pandilleros mataron a los guardias y luego abandonaron el lugar.

La comunidad de Tocoy está en estado de shock y llora el destino de sus habitantes. "Hicimos todo lo que pudimos por evitar que nos pasara esto" -dijo el alcalde de la comunidad, Héctor Álvarez.

Los guardias de "Dolón" habían sido contratados por la empresa de transporte de cargas "Dolón" para velar por el bienestar de los trabajadores que operaban en la finca "Cerro Colorado". Según los familiares, los pandilleros habían amenazado anteriormente a los guardias con la muerte si no accedían a sus demandas.

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Bajo Aguán: Attack on farms leaves 5 dead and 11 wounded

Four security guards of Dinant Corporation / Exportadora del Atlántico and a peasant were killed yesterday during a shootout at Paso Aguán farm, in African palm plantations, between Tocoa and Trujillo.

In addition to the deceased, police authorities reported that 11 security guards were injured due to shooting in the village Panamá of this Caribbean port. The clash occurred at 6:00 am at the precise moment that guards who served Saturday night and Sunday morning were delivering the shift on relay.

According to Osman Santos Díaz, deputy police in Colón, between 200 and 300 armed men surprised the guards with firing from assault rifles, who in return opened fire to repel the attack. According to the explanations of Santos, the group of civilians entered the farm and, when about 20 guards were driving in two cars on the sidewalks of palm plantation, received the volley of bullets.

Some of the guards, who were less injured, reacted in defense and shoot against the men that probably entered the farm at night to commit the assault at the moment of the relay. After the confrontation, when the fire ceased, the guards aided each other and were transferred in several vehicles to San Isidro Hospital (public) and Aguán Hospital (private), both in Tocoa, where the four died.

Tocoa police authorities requested support from their colleagues in La Ceiba and from members of the Armed Forces to meet the emergency and enter the farm, where they found the body of a 22 years old man identified with the name Wilmer Javier Melgar, who, according to the troops, is a member of a peasant group from the village Las Pilas, located 10 kms from the confrontation.

After 10:00 am, authorities found at the crime scene caps from AK-47 rifles, nine-millimeter gun, .223 and other calibers, but did not found weapons anywhere on the farm. A correspondent from DIARIO TIEMPO in Colón consulted peasant leaders from the sector on the fact occurred but said they did not know what happened.

PRESS RELEASE

Yesterday afternoon, employees of Dinant Corporation / Exportadora del Atlántico issued a statement in which they reported that “armed groups under disguise of peasant groups, tried to take by force the Paso Aguán farm, property of business Exportadora del Atlántico, S.A. of C.V.”

In the statement, the employees of the Company said that “a group of about 200 heavily armed people attacked those facilities with the balance of 4 guards dead and 11 guards wounded, leaving the families of our coworkers again with mourn”.

Workers did not blamed directly the peasant groups, that for the last two years agrarian conflict have remained with the owners of Dinant Group. “We demand an end to violence, we request a halt to abuse of these criminal groups that jeopardize our jobs”, exposes the statement sent yesterday to DIARIO TIEMPO.

It is the first time that a bloody deed takes place at Paso Aguán farm, in Panama village. Months ago, corpses of guards and peasants shot dead appeared in other farms in Tocoa.

DECEASED GUARDS
1. Marco Antonio Guillén
2. José Ángel Guzmán Vásquez
3. José de Jesús García Flores
4. José Alfredo Aguilar Chirinos
WOUNDED
Elías Emir Juárez
Alex Pérez Sabillón
Manuel de Jesús Fúnez
Emir Neptalí Ronal Ríos
Manuel de Jesús Ramírez
Jairo Jair Mejía
Victoriano Méndez
Oscar Arita
José Isaias Cruz Castro
Oscar Edgardo Cárcamo
Santiago Murillo

DECEASED CIVIL
Wilmer Javier Melgar

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION
Dinant planea suspender la negociación con el Gobierno

TODA COLON

El director del Instituto Nacional Agrario (INA), César Flam, descartó que grupos de campesinos sean los responsables de la masacre de once personas en la localidad de Paso Aguán, donde afirmó que no se ha logrado dar explicaciones. El incidente ocurrió el pasado 14 de agosto, en las 8 de la mañana que localizaron en una estación de agua en varias disparos. Familiares dijeron que el fallecido se reía a problemas y que lo ultimaron por su posibilidad de la venta de tierras en el área, lo que generó tensiones con el Gobierno. El director de la entidad reconoció que hay conflictos en el área, pero no lo relacionó con la masacre.

Ham asegura que campesinos no participaron en la masacre

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Dinant plans to suspend negotiations with the Government

Executives from Dinant, business owned by Miguel Facusse, announced that they are planning to suspend the agreement reached with the Government for the sale of 4,045 hectares of land in Aguan due to recent clashes.

This decision was taken following recent events on the previous weekend, regarding peasant groups and members of security of this company, which ended tragically with a balance of 5 people who perished and 11 more wounded.

The deceased are the guards from the Company, Marco Antonio Guillén, José Ángel Guzmán Vásquez, José de Jesús García Flores, José Alfredo Aguilar y Wilmer Javier Melgar (civil).

The Company’s treasurer, Roger Pineda, said in a press conference that “due to the violent situation and murderer of more coworkers, we definitely find a setting that do not allow the Company to continue working in favorable conditions which normally must be found for an investor, and for this reason we have planned to suspend the agreement”.

He emphasized that for this reason the final decision will be contemplated to establish if they continue with the preliminary agreement with the Government, so far everything achieved is at a standstill on negotiations reached with the State for the sale of 4,045 hectares of lands that would be ascribed to peasant farms in the area.

The executive called on the Government “to take actions so that local and foreign investment can progress and to ensure the safety of employees and Hondurans, as the conditions of the moment are not the best because the lives of our employees are threatened”.

He denounced that the attacks could come from peasant groups, who seek to broaden the ownership of land that they have to date and “in this sense it is definitely very hard to keep working”.

The farms negotiated between the Government and Dinant are Marañones, Isla I, Isla II, Concepción, Lempira, La Aurora and La Confianza, and the two peasant groups identified of participating in the death of guards are the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA) and the Authentic Peasant Claiming Movement (MARCA).

Victims rise to six in Paso Aguan
Another farm employee from Paso Aguan, where five persons were killed on Sunday, was found dead yesterday morning with an ear cut off.

The victim was identified as Ramón Hernández Leodanys Lobo, of 43 years old, who worked as a “cutter” of fruit in African palm plantation of Paso Aguan farm.

Lobo lived in the community of Rigores, near Paso Aguan farm. Family members said that he left home early on Sunday on his bicycle and they did not hear from him since.

Upon learning of the shooting which left four guards and a peasant killed, they went looking for him but it was until yesterday at 8 in the morning that he was located in a ditch, dead from multiple gunshots.
Family members said that the deceased were no involved in problems and he was killed for being an employee of Dinant Corporation. They directly blamed the peasants for his death.

With the death of Lobo, five are the employees of the Company killed on Sunday’s attack. The others are guards: Marco Antonio Guillén, José Ángel Guzmán Vásquez, José de Jesús García Flores and José Alfredo Aguilar Chirinos. Also the farmer Wilmer Javier Melgar was killed.

According to the police version, on Sunday August 14th at 6:00 in the morning, between 200 and 300 men perpetrated an attack on the farm Paso Aguán, which left at least 11 wounded and 6 dead.

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Ham ensures that peasants did not participate in the slaughter
The director of the National Agrarian Institute (INA), César Ham, denied that peasant groups are responsible for the slaughter of eleven persons in Bajo Aguán because property was not seized.

Ham said that by reviewing the fact, he observed that no property was taken, so this is about criminals who surely wanted to steal fruit from the farm, and this is no longer the responsibility of INA to investigate but rather to the National Criminal Investigation Department.

Ham lamented that a crime is being linked with the agrarian problem because there are sectors that do not want this situation resolved.

“The information that we have is that they are not peasants from the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA) or the Authentic Peasant Claiming Movement (MARCA) and do not belong to any peasant organization legally recognized by the State”, he said.

Business from the area are well aware that there are groups that have been operating in this last month trying to boycott the agreement signed between the Government, peasants and Mr. Miguel Facusse, because ultimately, they have been stealing fruit and not only African palm but also other crops such as citrus”, he explained.

He appealed to the National Police to find responsibles for this crime because otherwise a doubtful nebula will stay on peasants and that threatens the agreement.

He said that the agrarian conflict is being resolved because they are defining the price of land that it will be purchased from Facusse and soon the decree will be sent to the National Congress to concretize the agreement.

THIS IS A FREE TRANSLATION