



Rhett Butler
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February 16, 2017

Dear Mr. Butler:

Re: Mongabay Article on Global Witness Report

Sandra Cuffe's article "*Honduran Politicians, US Aid Implicated in Killings of Environmentalists*," published on your website on 1 February 2017, simply regurgitates many of the inaccurate and damaging statements about Corporación Dinant contained in Global Witness's report.

Global Witness's report has been refuted by a wide range of people and organizations in Honduras. It is absurd to connect Dinant with vast numbers of deaths in the Aguán valley just because those tragic killings have occurred in the same region in which we own large tracts of land. Global Witness and Ms. Cuffe have fallen into the trap of believing the ludicrous propaganda of political extremists in Honduras, who are adept at spreading malicious Internet rumors about successful Honduran corporations and encouraging western media outlets to write about them. The facts are that 19 Dinant security guards and six armed trespassers were killed on or near Dinant property during the Honduran land conflicts. We are deeply saddened by these tragic and unnecessary deaths. All of those lives count, and all deserve to be remembered and for justice to be served. Dinant is committed to working with the public authorities to ensure that, to the extent of our capabilities, there is legal accountability for these lost lives. If there was any disproportionate use of force by Dinant security staff and contractors in their efforts to defend themselves, company employees and property, then such cases must be addressed by a public investigation and appropriate legal action taken as soon as possible. We ask that the same standard apply to all parties. To date, all Dinant employees or contractors brought to trial have been acquitted on grounds of self-defense. So far, none of the 19 murdered Dinant security guards have received justice.

It is in the interests of everyone in the Aguán - including Dinant, our staff and thousands of our independent suppliers - that peace and stability continues to return to the region so that economic prosperity may flourish for the benefit of all. That is why, over two years ago, Dinant disarmed all security men and women at all of its plantations, extraction mills and manufacturing plants throughout Honduras, and it is why we were the first company in Honduras to fully implement the *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*.



Since securing a \$15m loan from the IFC division of the World Bank in 2009, Dinant has invested significant time and resources in modernizing our security, enhancing the natural environment and engaging peacefully with local communities. The IFC's loan to Dinant was granted to support our ongoing investment program to increase production capacity; to expand and upgrade our distribution network; to enhance the surrounding natural environment, and to expand economic opportunities for the poor, particularly in rural areas like the Aguán. By all these measures, and more, the IFC's loan to Dinant has been a great success.

I invite you and Ms. Cuffe to visit Dinant's African Palm plantations in the Bajo Aguán region, as well as the rest of our operations sites, to witness firsthand the results of the extensive resources that we have invested in community engagement, and environmental and social management. In the meantime, I kindly ask that you publish this letter next to Ms. Cuffe's original article so that your readers can be made aware of Dinant's perspective on these important issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Pineda Pinel", written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Roger Pineda Pinel
Corporate and Banking Relations Director, Corporación Dinant

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cc. Sandra Cuffe, sandra.m.cuffe@gmail.com