

## **Land conflict over palm oil plantations escalates: 33 human rights and environmental organisations call for a halt to Dinant palm oil from Honduras**

*Palm oil from the manufacturer Dinant is entering the global market from Honduras – despite violence, displacement and human rights violations. The first companies are reacting, but many are not yet taking action.*

**Münster, Germany, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2025** – Three murdered activists, more than 160 displaced families and more than 500 people in temporary shelters: this is the result of the recent escalation of the land conflict in the Aguán Valley in Honduras. The conflict is about land used by the palm oil producer Corporación Dinant to cultivate oil palms. Since the end of December, armed groups have been violently attacking the cooperatives of small farmers who want to protect their livelihoods and assert their right to the land. Many well-known international trading companies such as ADM or Cargill trade in the palm oil from the Aguán Valley. That way it enters the supply chains of numerous companies such as Flora Food, Vandemoortele or Pepsico and can be found in branded products in supermarkets. ‘We appeal urgently to these companies and demand that they fulfil their due diligence! In this case, the appropriate measure is to suspend business relations. It is imperative that the land conflicts are resolved peacefully before another drop of Dinant palm oil enters global supply chains,’ said Dominik Groß, CIR expert on human rights in agricultural supply chains. The appeal was signed by 33 civil society organisations. The first companies have already responded: the chemical company BASF and the agricultural giant Bunge have terminated their supply relationships with Dinant after receiving reports of ongoing violence. Food manufacturer Nestlé has also announced that it intends to remove the supplier from its supply chains.

### **Dinant is repeatedly associated with violent incidents.**

Dinant has been criticised for years for being responsible for land evictions and human rights violations in the Aguán Valley. The company is said to have close ties to armed groups that violently evict smallholder cooperatives to secure land for large-scale palm oil plantations. The land grab was already accompanied by violence in the 2010s, with over 150 small farmers killed or abducted. Threats have become a constant companion for smallholder cooperatives, especially for leaders of the Plataforma Agraria and Coordinadora de Organizaciones Populares del Aguán (COPA), who have been campaigning for the rights of smallholder farmers and against land grabbing. ‘Responsible companies should not buy palm oil from a company like Dinant, which respects neither human rights nor the environment and which has even resorted to murder to further its own interests,’ said Yoni Rivas, coordinator of the peasant movement in the Aguán Valley.

### **Government can end structural violence in the Aguán**

Just last year, Dinant's palm oil was certified as sustainable by the industry-relevant RSPO label. ‘Instead of stopping Dinant, the company's violent land grab to expand palm oil production is being rewarded,’ said Groß. ‘International organisations, governments and companies must take responsibility and actively contribute to ending structural violence in Honduras!’ President Xiomara Castro, elected in 2022, had promised the smallholder cooperatives protection of their land rights when she took office. However, the commission announced by

Castro to address the conflicts has still not started its work. There is still time for this before new elections are held at the end of the year.



Caption: 'Stop the criminalisation of popular resistance!' was the demand of demonstrators during a peaceful protest in the Aguán Valley. Photo: Centro de Derecho de Mujeres.



Caption: Displaced members of a farmers' cooperative demonstrate together with COPA and Plataforma Agraria for the protection of their rights and to return to their land. Photo: Plataforma Agraria.

#### **PRESS CONTACT:**

Dominik Groß

Romero Initiative (CIR)

E-Mail: [gross@ci-romero.de](mailto:gross@ci-romero.de)

Tel. 0251 – 674413-43

#### **ABOUT THE ROMERO INITIATIVE (CIR):**

We are an NGO from Münster, Germany and we campaign for labour and human rights, especially in Brazil and Central America. With our campaigning and educational work, we build bridges to Germany. Our vision is a just world of solidarity, in which a good life is possible for everyone.