

Breaking news: No end in sight to Honduran nightmare. Huge profits being made by corrupt regime and international business and drug-trafficking partners

(View in browser: <http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=3668ceb82c>)

It is hard to overstate how poorly the Canadian and US politicians and media have commented and reported on Honduran issues since the 2009 US and Canadian backed military coup brought the current repressive and corrupt regime back to power.

The articles below demonstrate again – and broadly – the nature of the regime in power. The governments of the US and Canada, the World Bank, our companies and investors are directly supporting and profiting from the now endemic exploitation and repression, corruption and impunity that leave so many dead – like the assassination of Berta Caceres – and forces tens of thousands to flee north, year after year, despite increase racism and backlash in the US, despite higher walls being built, despite having to deal with more violent armed forces – government and narco-trafficking – while crossing Mexico.



Then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton heralding Honduras' post-military coup leader President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo. Then Canadian Prime Minister heralding the signing of a "free trade" agreement with the post military coup government of "Pepe" Lobo, while Harper was leading a major Canadian business delegation to Honduras in 2011.

World Bank-funded Dinant Corporation Implicated In Drug Trafficking Again

By Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network

<http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2017/3/10/world-bank-funded-dinant-corporation-implicated-in-drug-trafficking-again>

Honduras is being shaken up by a court case in the New York Southern District Courts against Fabio Porfirio Lobo, the son of ex-Honduran President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo. On Monday, March 6th in New York, a witness called by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Lobo's case, Devis Leonel Rivera Maradiaga, [implicated](#) Honduran politicians and elites in the drug trafficking activities of Rivera Maradiaga's drug cartel "Los Cachiros".

Rivera Maradiaga is one of the leaders of the Los Cachiros cartel that was [identified](#) by the United States Treasury in September 2013 as a "drug trafficking organization." Testifying before a Federal Judge,

Rivera Maradiaga [implicated](#) former Honduran President Porfirio Lobo, his brother Ramon Lobo, his nephew Jorge Lobo, two Congressional candidates - Congressman Oscar Nájera for the department of Colon and Congressman Fredy Nájera for the department of Olancho - and the LIBRE mayor of Tocoa, Adán Funes. Rivera Maradiaga also mentioned the well-known Facussé family that owns the Honduran company, Dinant Corporation.



Randy Jorgensen, the infamous “Porn King” and well known Canadian tourism investor and operator, seen here in photo-ops with (left) then President “Pepe” Lobo and (right) “Pepe’s” brother Ramon Lobo.

Below is a translation of an article [published](#) by UniVision written by Juan Cooper that outlines Rivera Maradiaga's mention of Dinant Corporation and how the World Bank-funded Dinant Corporation has been [ONCE AGAIN](#) implicated in drug trafficking activities in Honduras.

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Drug Traffickers Used Landing Strip of Honduran Millionaire Businessman According to Witness in US

From UniVision News [online](#), By Juan Cooper, March 9, 2017

The United States Government suspected for more than a decade that the landing strips of the extensive plantations of the billionaire businessman Miguel Facussé Barjum in Honduras, one of the most powerful men in that country, were used by drug traffickers.

This week, prosecutors of the Federal Government of New York added evidence in this regard: a convicted drug trafficker said in 2013 that he used a landing strip in one of Facussé’s plantations to land a plane full of drugs coming from Venezuela. The confessed Honduran drug trafficker Devis Leonel Rivera Maradiaga, former leader of the Cachiros cartel, did not clarify if Facussé, who died in 2015, or his family, were aware of the operation. A spokesperson for Dinant Corporation, the company that the Facussé family manages, did not rule out that the incident had happened but said that its an uncontrollable situation. “As many others in the region, we have been victims of drug traffickers, who have used our property in an illegal manner, without our knowledge, cooperation or permission, to carry out their smuggling activities in our country,” responded Roger Pineda Pinel, director of Corporate Relations and Banking.

In his statement, Rivera offered additional details of several incidents where supposedly his organization received favors from ex-Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa, and of some of their relatives, in exchange for juicy bribes.

The statements are part of the judicial process for drug trafficking against Fabio Porfirio Lobo, son of the former Honduran President, who pleaded guilty in May 2016, and Rivera is one of the witnesses of the Drug Enforcement Agency of the United States (DEA).

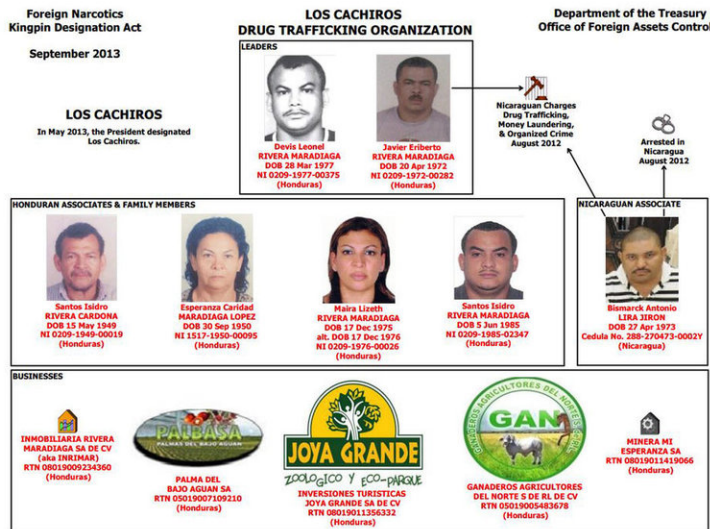


Photo: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF LOS CACHIROS BY OFAC | US TREASURY

Rivera affirmed that he received protection from Fabio Lobo at the end of 2013, when preparing to receive a plane loaded with 1,050 kilograms of cocaine coming from the state of Apure in Venezuela. He recalled that the drugs would be shipped by his Colombian contacts, and that the aircraft would land in the Farallones community in the department of Colon on the shores of the Caribbean sea.

Days before, Rivera had contacted Fabio Lobo by phone to request protection because a “large shipment” would be arriving. Lobo arrived to the city of Tocoa, capital of the department of Colon, with his security personnel in three, blue, Toyota Prados with police sirens, and they stayed in the Hotel Sanabria to await the arrival of the drugs.

According to Rivera’s narration, the next day the drug was received by Noé ‘Ton’ Montes and his mother, Erlinda ‘Chinda’ Ramos, two alleged members of Los Cachiros who controlled the area of Farallones.

An official of the Honduran Military Police called ‘Fortin’ was who sent the information from the radar to the landed aircraft without mishap, the witness said.

In the middle of the account, the Prosecutor of the Southern District of New York Emil Bove asked Rivera:

“What type of landing strip did you use in Farallones?”
He replied: “The private landing strip of Mr. Facussé”.
The prosecutor continued: “The private airport?”
Rivera replied: “Yes, sir”.

The drugs were loaded on a truck that arrived to Tocoa, where Fabio Lobo with his three official cars waited to escort it on a journey that spanned half the country, passing through La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula to reach La Entrada in the department of Colon.

According to his account, Rivera and Lobo went in one of the vehicles in the caravan that guarded the vehicle loaded with the ton of cocaine during the 400 kilometer journey by road, managing to navigate the questions of officers in various police and military roadblocks, until you reach Copan where Digna Valle, who is currently serving a sentence for drug trafficking in Miami, received the goods.

For this operation, the son of ex-President Lobo received \$50,000, but according to Rivera, was not satisfied because they should give a commission to General Julián Pacheco, the current Honduran Security Minister.



Photo: MIGUEL FACUSSÉ BARJUM, FOUNDER OF (World Bank business partner) DINANT CORPORATION

Miguel Facussé Barjum, who began his career transforming warplanes into commercial aircraft in the 1940s, and became one of the most powerful men in Honduras, had already been under the radar of the U.S. Government. A [cable](#) from the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa dated March 19, 2004 leaked by Wikileaks, mentioned the landing of a narco aircraft in one of his private landing strips: “a law enforcement source provided information that the aircraft successfully landed March 14 on the private property of Miguel Facusse, a prominent Honduran, who is one of the nation’s wealthiest individuals, leading industrialist, and uncle of former Honduran president Carlos Flores Facussé” says a part of the cable.

In a statement to Univision, the Dinant spokesperson said: “We strongly condemn the use of our properties or any other property to carry out illegal activities related to drug trafficking. We continue to assist the competent authorities in their efforts to combat drug trafficking, immediately reporting any illegal activity that could be found to have occurred on our properties.”

Facussé was the founder and owner of Dinant Corporation, formerly Química Dinant, which became a conglomerate of food and cleaning products with various brands of canned food, snacks and house products. The company is known for having the license for the production and marketing of the Central American market of Mazola cooking oil.

Palm Oil

One of Dinant Corporation's most profitable businesses are the twelve thousand hectares of African palm plantations it owns in the Aguan and Lean Valleys that feed two extraction plants and an palm oil refinery in the city of Tocoa. Palm oil is a valuable input used in different industries, like food and cosmetics, around the world.



Photo: HONDURAN YOUTH PATROLS THE CONFLICT ZONE BETWEEN CAMPESINOS AND DINANT | AP

Throughout the country where these crops are planted, Dinant Corporation have been accused of generating violence to confront hundreds of peasants and dispossessing them of their land in order to expand its African palm plantations.

A World Bank internal audit performed in 2013 after the institution granted credits of \$30 million to Dinant Corporation established that during confrontations with campesinos inside the company's land, several people had been killed "because of inappropriate use of private and public security forces under Dinant's control or influence."

Dinant has responded on several occasions that these allegations have no foundation. In a [statement](#) the company said: "We care deeply about the wellbeing of our employees, the thousands of farmers who supply our processing plants, and the surrounding communities of which we are an integral part. We will remain members of these communities for the long term, helping to enhance the quality of life for all citizens that live and work there."

Facussé, who died at 90 years of age, was known for having a strong temperament and for his proximity to political power. He openly supported the military coup that toppled Manuel Zelaya in June 2009, and was at that time the exacerbation of campesino clashes with Dinant Corporation.

At the time of the growing human rights crisis in the Lower Aguan and other zones of influence of Dinant, the same territory was tapped by the Cachiros organization in order to carry out drug trafficking operations with the support of figures like Fabio Porfirio Lobo. Days after having published the Wikileaks cable, Miguel Facussé said that he would do whatever possible so that drug-laden planes would not use his private landing strip again.

Elites-Backed Honduras Drug Trafficker Sentenced to 10 Years

by James Bargent, 15 March 2017

<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/elites-backed-drug-trafficker-sentenced-10-years>

A court in [Honduras](#) has sentenced drug trafficker José Miguel "Chepe" Handal to 10 years in prison, bringing to a halt a criminal career that connected organized crime with Honduran business and political elites.

Handal was found guilty of drug trafficking in November last year, after prosecutors established his responsibility for a drug flight that attempted to move over one and a half tons of cocaine through the Honduran island of Utila in 2009, [reported La Prensa](#).

The verdict means an end to US authorities' attempts to extradite Handal, at least for the moment, as their extradition request will not be executed while he is serving time in [Honduras](#).

Handal was once a respected businessman in [Honduras](#), and he once ran for a seat in Congress. However, [according to official investigations](#) in both [Honduras](#) and the United States, he was also an important link in the cocaine supply chain that flows from [Colombia](#) to the United States, and had connections to the Mexican cartels that control this chain, among them the [Sinaloa Cartel](#) and the [Zetas](#).

InSight Crime Analysis

Handal was one of the first of [Honduras'](#) elite-backed drug traffickers to be pushed into the spotlight by the United States, which [added him to the US Treasury's "Kingpin List"](#) in 2013. This marked the start of US attempts to publically identify several drug networks that had grown thanks to the protection of political and economic elites, and to pile pressure on the Honduran state to take action against them.

SEE ALSO: [Honduras Elites and Organized Crime](#)

Since then, authorities have successfully pursued the leadership of even more powerful networks like [the Cachiros](#) and [the Valles](#). The governments efforts in these cases have made serious inroads in tackling Honduran drug trafficking networks and the elites that protect them.

However, unlike the [Cachiros](#) and the Valle Valle clan, Handal has managed to avoid extradition to the United States, and instead will serve his time in [Honduras](#). Given the levels of corruption in both Honduran courts and prisons, this could create room for Handal to leverage whatever influence he still has to his advantage. Thus, it would not be a surprise if his underworld story does not end here.

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