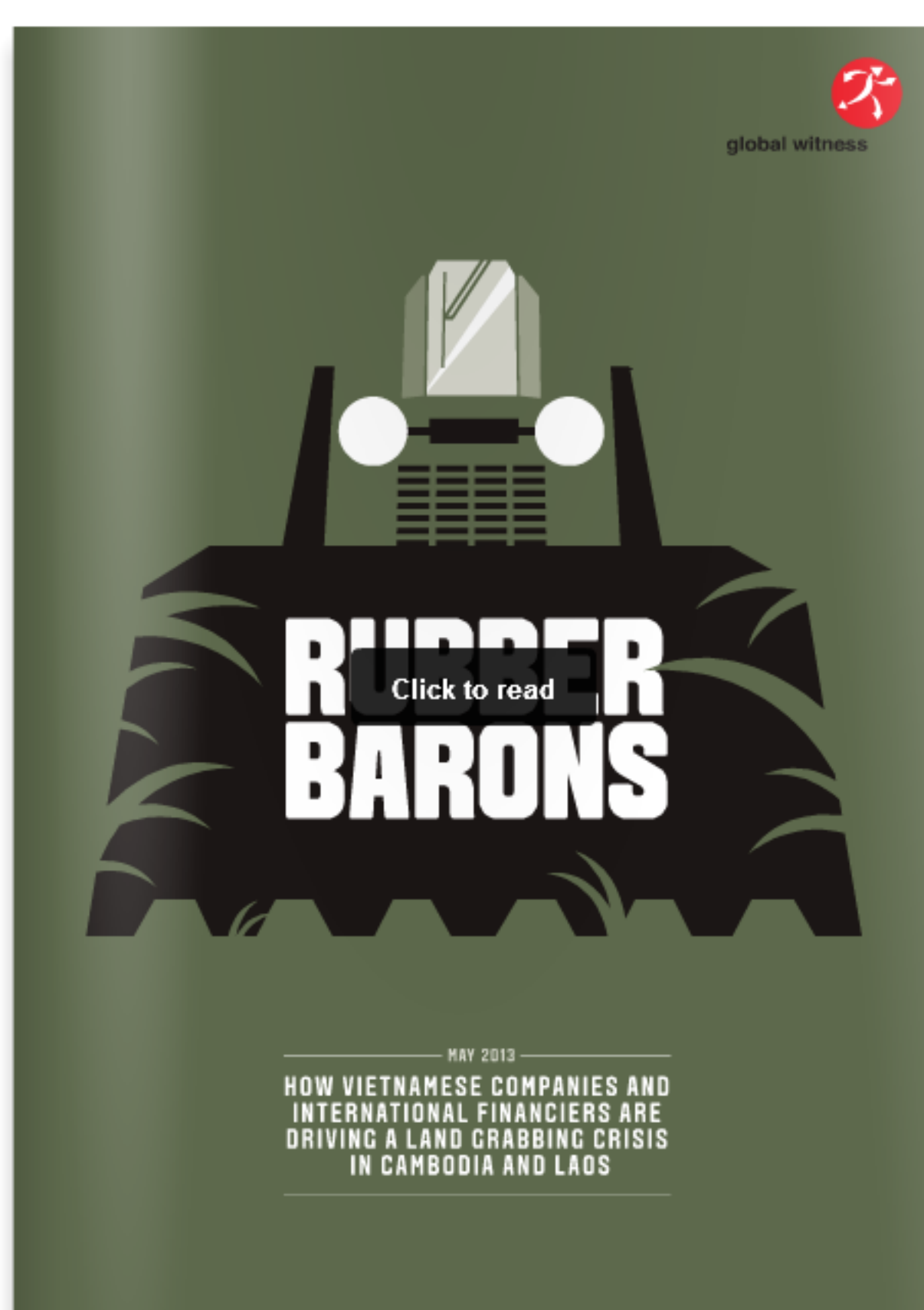


# RUBBER BARONS

HOW VIETNAMESE COMPANIES AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIERS ARE DRIVING A LAND GRABBING CRISIS IN CAMBODIA AND LAOS

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ISSUU

## RUBBER BARONS – THE FILM



On the road with Global Witness investigators to witness the devastation caused by VRG and HAGL and hear the stories of those most affected.

## FOREST DESTRUCTION FROM ABOVE



Satellite imagery shows the extent of forest clearance within and beyond the boundaries of rubber concessions in Kratie Province, Cambodia, which are owned by Dong Phu and Dong Nai, two member companies of the Vietnam Rubber Group. This image compares forest cover between March 2008, four months before these rubber concessions were approved, and February 2013.

Move the slider to see the change in forest cover.

This is just one example of where VRG and HAGL have been illegally clearing large areas of intact forest. [For more examples see Rubber Barons.](#)

## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report shows how vast amounts of land have been acquired for rubber plantations in Cambodia and Laos by two of Vietnam's largest companies, Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL) and the Vietnam Rubber Group (VRG). The rubber barons are financed by international investors including Deutsche Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – the private lending arm of the World Bank.

It lays bare the culture of secrecy and impunity that has allowed these two rubber giants to gain rights to more than 200,000 hectares of concession land through secretive deals with the Lao and Cambodian governments. They have close links with the region's corrupt political elites and operate with complete impunity, devastating local livelihoods and the environment in the process. Rubber Barons is the first exposé of the role of international financiers in these land grabs. Deutsche Bank has multi-million dollar holdings in both companies, while the IFC invests in HAGL.

Global Witness urges the governments of Laos and Cambodia to immediately cancel the rubber concessions in question, suspend and investigate VRG and HAGL's rubber operations, and where there is evidence of illegal activities, prosecute the companies. It also calls on international governments to bring in and enforce regulations to stop international banks and financial institutions from continuing to turn a blind eye to deforestation and human rights abuses.

When approached by Global Witness in advance of publishing Rubber Barons, HAGL confirmed holding rubber plantations totalling 46,752 hectares in Cambodia and Laos but denied knowledge of any disputes with local communities or their involvement in illegal activities. VRG meanwhile stated the evidence presented to them was not true, but declined to confirm the status or holdings of its rubber operations in either country.

Six months after the launch of Rubber Barons, HAGL had failed to keep to commitments to address environmental and human rights abuses in its plantations in Cambodia and Laos. Subsequently, Global Witness considers the company to pose a financial and reputational risk to its investors, including Deutsche Bank and the International Finance Corporation, and in November 2013 [recommended](#) they divest. Following this call [at least one investor](#) withdrew their financial backing from the company.

On 10th February 2014, indigenous communities in Cambodia submitted a [complaint](#) to the IFC against its financing of HAGL. By the 24th of the month, the CAO [confirmed](#) the complaint met its criteria and that it had begun an assessment of the situation on the ground.

Meanwhile, negotiations between Global Witness and the Vietnam Rubber Group about the action they are taking to address the social and environmental problems associated with their rubber plantations in Laos and Cambodia are ongoing.

## REPORT & SUMMARIES

GLOBAL WITNESS RESPONDS TO HAGL

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