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Panama: Independent Banana Growers Persecuted By Chiquita Brands Subsidiary

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In a Nov. 18 communiqué, a Panamanian banana grower association denounced the Chiriqui Land company, a subsidiary of US-based Chiquita Brands, for retaliatory action against seven growers who have signed contracts with Standard Fruit, another US-based transnational. The statement said Chiriqui is boycotting bananas produced on the seven growers' plantations in an attempt to "persecute [them] for their decision to become independent, and seek better returns for their labor." According to the association, Chiriqui is waging a "virtual psychological war" against growers considering independent status. Chiquita Brands and Standard Fruit together dominate nearly two-thirds of the world banana market. In Panama, Chiriqui has held a near monopoly on exports for almost a century. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 11/18/91)

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