

## Global firms accused of importing timber linked to Amazon massacre



Greenpeace alleges 12 companies continued to trade with *Madeiraira Cedroarana* after its founder was accused of ordering torture and murder

*by Jonathan Watts*  
23 November 2017

More than a dozen US and European companies have been importing timber from a Brazilian logging firm whose owner is implicated in one of the most brutal Amazonian massacres in recent memory, according to [a Greenpeace Brazil investigation](#).

The first-world buyers allegedly continued trading with *Madeiraira Cedroarana* after police accused its founder, Valdelir João de Souza, of ordering [the torture and murder of nine people](#) in Colniza, Mato Grosso, on 19 April, claims the report by the NGO.

The state attorney alleges de Souza organised the assassinations to gain access to the forest where the victims – all smallholders – lived. Since the indictment on 15 May, the suspect has been on the run.

During this period, the fugitive's company allegedly sold products to foreign firms who shipped them to the US, Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada and Japan.

[Greenpeace](#) alleges these shipments may be in contravention of the US Lacey Act, which bans trade in timber that violates any foreign law, and the European Union's timber regulation, which obliges companies to conduct due diligence to ensure there is "no more than a negligible risk that it has been illegally harvested."

It lists the 13 companies involved as Pine Products, Lacey Wood Products, Mid-State Lumber Corp, South Florida Lumber, Wood Brokerage International, Vogel Import & Export, Delfin Germany, Tiger Deck, Global Timber, Centre Import Bois Méditerranée, Derlage Junior Hout, Global Gold Forest and Houthandel van der Hoek.

Even before this year's massacre, the report alleges these firms should have hesitated to do business with Madeireira Cedroarana because it had accrued about £130,000 in unpaid federal fines for stocking and trading illegal timber. There also appears to be evidence of widespread fraud, timber laundering and killings of forest defenders in Amazon states including Mato Grosso.

Greenpeace urged US and European authorities to consider Brazilian timber to be at high risk of coming from an illegal source, and thus to oblige companies to go beyond official paperwork and to carry out third-party field audits.