

Honduras: International Mission “Justice for Berta Cáceres” and solidarity initiatives

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PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MISSION TO HONDURAS: JUSTICE FOR BERTA CÁCERES AND COPINH

March 17, 2016

Representatives of social networks from different regions of the world will travel to Honduras today as part of the International Mission “Justice for Berta Cáceres”. The mission is organised by the Honduran organisation Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) - from the National Network of Human Rights defenders in Honduras - and individuals, collectives and organisations making up an international network of solidarity with the people of Honduras. The mission demands an impartial investigation of the brutal assassination of the indigenous Lenca leader Berta Cáceres, on the 3rd of March.

The mission will coincide with a number of mass demonstrations, protests and other actions by Honduran civil society in the coming three days. The protests will condemn the assassination of Berta Cáceres and show solidarity with Gustavo Castro, who was injured in the attack against Berta. Gustavo has been denied permission to leave Honduras, despite cooperating with the police investigation and indicating his willingness to answer any further questions from Mexico.

Two weeks after the assassination of Lenca Berta Cáceres, Noé García - another leader of the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) - was murdered on March 15th in the community of Río Chiquito (Cortés). This new aggression against a human, indigenous and environment rights defender took place following the violent eviction of 150 Lenca families of the COPINH in Río Lindo (Cortés) by the Cobras Special Commandos of the Military Police. This is not an isolated incident; it is part of the daily systematic violation of human rights within a global framework that protects the interests of transnational corporations.

Berta Cáceres was part of the resistance against the “Agua Zarca” project, a dam project developed in cooperation with European and US finance institutions: The German giant Voith Siemens, the FMO (Netherlands Development Finance Company), Finnfund (Finnish Fund for Industrial Cooperation), and the CABEI (Central American Bank for Economic Integration). Facing growing pressure from international civil society, the FMO has decided to suspend all its operations in Honduras, including its participation in the “Agua Zarca” dam. COPINH has demanded the full withdrawal of all the corporations and financiers from Lenca territories.

The International Mission expects to meet with the highest authorities of the country to demand an impartial investigation of the assassination of Berta Cáceres. With the participation of an International Commission of Inquiry it will demand the immediate release of the Mexican Gustavo Castro, guarantees for his security and his return to Mexico.

The mission assumes the demands of the family of Berta Cáceres and the COPINH as its own, which includes the immediate and definitive suspension of the Agua Zarca project and the cancellation of all concessions to extractivist projects in the Lenca territories.

The delegation includes the following people:

Miguel Urbán Crespo - Europe, Member of the European Parliament by PODEMOS - European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)

Nora Cortiñas - Argentina, Madre de Plaza de Mayo-Founder Line

Pedro Arrojo - Spain, Member of the Spanish Parliament (PODEMOS)

José Olvera - México, UNT-CSA México, National Union of Workers / Trade Union Confederation of the Americas

Beverly Keene - Argentina, Coordinator Dialogue 2000-Jubileo Sur Argentina, member of the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity

Mirna Perla Jiménez - El Salvador, former magistrate Supreme Court of Justicia in El Salvador

Brian Finnegan - United States, AFL/CIO - CSA. American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Zulma Larin - El Salvador, Coordinator Red de Ambientalistas Comunitarios y Coordinación de la Alianza por la Gobernabilidad y la Justicia

Natalia Atz Sunuc - Guatemala, Friends of the Earth Latin American and the Caribbean (ATALC)

Gustavo Lozano - México, Scholar and Lawyer of the social movements coalition for the water and the land (MAPDER and REMA) in cooperation with the Central American movement.

Tom Kucharz - Spain, Political advisor to the PODEMOS delegation in the European Parliament, member of the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and stop Impunity.

Miguel Ángel de los Santos - México, Lawyer of the Iberoamerican networks of magistrates.

The mission will stay in the country until the 20th of March and will attend meetings with organisation of the social movement, visit the family of Berta Cáceres and the COPINH coordinators in La Esperanza, Intibucá.

The first press conference of the International Mission will take place in Tegucigalpa on Thursday 17 of March .

Location: Centro Loyola, frente al Edificio de CEDAC, Colonia Palmira, 4to Piso. Tegus

Time: 11h00 am (local time)

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