

March 3, 2016

Assassination of Berta Cáceres sparks outrage

We condemn the assassination of Berta Cáceres, general coordinator and co-founder of the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras. Berta was assassinated in La Esperanza, Intibuca after several individuals broke into the house where she was staying and shot and killed her.

An Indigenous Lenca women and community leader, Berta waged a grassroots campaign that successfully pressured the world's largest dam builder to pull out of the Agua Zarca Dam. Just last month, COPINH issued an alert noting that repression and violence against the Rio Blanco community, including Berta Cáceres had escalated as they carried out peaceful actions to protect the River Gualcarque against the construction of a hydroelectric dam by the internationally-financed Honduran company DESA. Due to the violence against her she was granted precautionary measures by the InterAmerican Commission for Human Rights.

Berta Cáceres was recognized nationally and internationally as an environmentalist who fought for Indigenous rights. In 2015 she was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, the highest international recognition for environmental activists. As part of her recognition speech she spoke of the repression she faced, "they follow me, they threaten to kill me and kidnap my family, this is what we face".

Berta was also instrumental in leading protests against the 2009 coup that overthrew the democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. Since the coup the human rights situation in Honduras has deteriorated as human rights defenders and social movement leaders are routinely killed and systematically criminalized.

On October 1, 2014, Canada implemented a Free Trade Agreement with Honduras despite opposition from civil society and labour organizations. The deal provided diplomatic and economic backing to an undemocratic government responsible for widespread human rights abuses, political violence that has generated massive inequality.

We call on the government of Canada to condemn the murder, and to call on the Honduran government to support an independent, international investigation into the murder.

Alternatives

ALBA capitulo Canada

Amnesty International Canada

Association de protection de l'environnement des Hautes-Laurentides

Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale

ATTAC-Québec

Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network

British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

Bolivarian Circle Louis Riel

Canada-El Salvador Cooperation for Development

Canadian Jesuits international
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Peace Congress
Canadian Union of Postal Workers
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Carrefour de solidarité internationale de Sherbooke
Centre international de solidarité ouvrière
Centre de solidarité internationale Corcovado
Centre for Social Justice
Centre justice et foi
Cercle des Premières Nations de l'UQAM
Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean
Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada
Coalition pour que le Québec ait meilleure mine
CoDevelopment Canada
Collectif du Mur de femmes contre les oléoducs et les sables bitumineux
Colombia Action Solidarity Alliance
Comité de vigilance de Malartic
Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine
Common Frontiers
Confédération des syndicats nationaux
Confederation of Canadian Unions
Conférence religieuse Canadienne
Coordination du Québec de la Marche mondiale des femmes
Council of Canadians
Development and Peace
Faculty Association of the University of St. Thomas
Fédération des femmes du Québec
Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec
Felician Franciscan Sisters of Canada
Idle No More
Inter Pares
Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice
Jesuits in English Canada
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network
Latin American Canadian Solidarity Association
La Coordination du Québec de la Marche mondiale des femmes
Le Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes signe sa solidarité
Ligue des droits et libertés
Maquila Solidarity Network
Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network
Mer et Monde
MiningWatch Canada
Mining Injustice Solidarity Network
Movimiento Farabundista
Norbert Piché, Directeur national Service jésuite des réfugiés

Office for Systemic Justice

OMI Lacombe Canada
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
Ontario Public Service Employees Union
Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine
Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Presentation Sisters Newfoundland and Labrador
Regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire
Regroupement Vigilance Mines Abitibi-Témiscamingue
Rights Action
Solidarité Laurentides Amérique centrale
Science for Peace
Sept - Îles sans uranium
Sierra Club Canada Foundation
Taproot Faith Community - Toronto
Toronto Archdiocesan Council for Development and Peace
United Church of Canada
United for Mining Justice
United Steelworkers
Unifor
Voyages Inter-cultures

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