

Rights Action  
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## **VICTORY FOR BERTA CACERES, COPINH AND THE HONDURAN RESISTANCE: 74-day blockade and protest against Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam in Rio Blanco continues**

**THANK-YOU to all** who wrote emails and letters, who called to the police in Honduras, who donated emergency support funds to Rights Action for COPINH.



(Berta Flores Caceres, Coordinator of COPINH speaks at the Regional Forum in Defence of Rivers and Nature's Common Wealth in the department of Santa Barbara, June 10, 2013. @ Karen Spring)

For years, Rights Action has proudly supported the Civic Council for indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). The attempt to lay trumped up charges against, and – in this way – “criminalize” Berta Caceres for her leadership in the Honduran social movement, indigenous struggles for human rights and in defence of natural resources, is part of an on-going campaign of criminalization against many Honduran activists that Rights Action and other organizations support. We will continue to support COPINH's efforts to defend their historical and ancestral human rights as Lenca indigenous people and the campaign against the unjust global economic system that benefits North American investors to the detriment of community development and human rights in Honduras.

For more information on the 74-day blockade, the hydroelectric dam and the International Financial Institutions and investors benefitting from the project:

<http://rightsaction.org/action-content/illegal-arrest-priest-and-22-members-honduran-national-resistance-front>

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## **VICTORY: TRIAL OF BERTA CARCERES SUSPENDED FOLLOWING MASSIVE WAVE OF PROTESTS WORLDWIDE**

**June 14, 2013**, by [Margaret Thompson, Escribana](#)

<http://escribana.org/victory-trial-of-bertha-carceres-suspended-following-massive-wave-of-protests-worldwide/>

The indigenous Lenca leader of COPINH and feminist activist Berta Carceres left the courthouse in Santa Barbara in NW Honduras this afternoon to the cheers of hundreds of supporters when she announced that the judge had temporarily suspended her trial due to insufficient evidence.

The suspension is an important victory not only for Carceres but also in the longtime struggle of the Lenca indigenous to protect their rights and defend their lands. But COPINH (Civic Council of Popular & Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) and the Women's Forum for Life are calling for continued pressure to ensure permanent dismissal of the charges.

**Carceres was arrested** and imprisoned overnight on May 24, 2013, by the Honduran military, as just one step in the criminalization of the struggle by the Lenca to halt illegal construction of a massive hydroelectric project on the **Rio Blanco** (White River) in northern Honduras. She was charged with illegal possession of a firearm, which was found in the back of a COPINH vehicle in which she was traveling to join the community resistance against Rio Blanco. Also arrested and later released was Tomas Gomez of the COPINH community radio.

The charges and trial of Carceres had generated a massive wave of protests around the world supported by a [petition by Escribana](#) posted on Avaaz.org. As of the publication of this article, the English petition had 366 signatures and the Spanish 1,266, for a total of 1,632 signatures. Each signature generated emails to six Honduran government officials regarding the case.

Along with temporary suspension of the trial, punitive measures against Carceres were also removed, including a requirement that she report weekly to sign in at the Santa Barbara court, and also that she was not allowed to leave the country.

As Carceres told Escribana in a recent interview, her arrest was one step in the criminalization of dissent, and represented the symbolic resistance of Lenca communities of Rio Blanco in their fight against a massive hydroelectric project on their ancestral lands without their permission. The project violates their rights as indigenous peoples to territorial autonomy, human rights and the rights of nature. Since April 2nd, the Lenca of maintained their resistance on the banks of the Rio Blanco, despite violent repression by military, police, and the private security of the SINHYDRO Company.

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