

Another COPINH Member Killed in Honduras, ‘Repression Capital of the Americas’, ‘Murder Capital of the World’

<http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=14597f7e94>

Nelson García, 38, a father of five and a member of COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras) was shot dead on March 15th by unidentified hit squads as he was returning home after Honduran regime forces had carried out yet another illegal, violent eviction of Lenca indigenous communities in the Cortés Department (northwest Honduras).

Since the U.S.- and Canadian-backed military coup in June 2009, a number of COPINH members – beyond Berta Cáceres – have been assassinated and killed; across the country, hundreds of community and environmental defense activists have been assassinated and murdered by State forces and State-tolerated private sector death squads.

This will not stop until the “international community” – particularly the governments of the U.S. and Canada, the U.S. military and also a host of international banks (including the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank) and global companies – are pressured to suspend “business as usual” military and economic relations with the military-backed regime in Honduras and demand serious legal and political reforms in the country, including full and impartial justice for all State sponsored assassinations and murders since the 2009 military coup – including that of Berta Cáceres.

Here, examples of two international investors that – finally – have suspended doing “business as usual” with the regime:

FMO (Entrepreneurial development bank) Suspends All Activities In Honduras Effective Immediately, 16 March 2016

<https://www.fmo.nl/k/n1771/news/view/28133/20819/fmo-suspends-all-activities-in-honduras-effective-immediately.html>

FMO is shocked by the news that Nelson García, another COPINH member, has been murdered in Honduras. After the recent violent death of Berta Cáceres, we have called upon the Honduran government to do anything in their power to stop the ongoing violence and killings in their country. The right of speech for those who speak up for their rights and the livelihoods of people are of very high value to FMO. Every individual should be safe when defending their position. FMO rejects and condemns any violence against those individuals or groups.

Given the current situation, with ongoing violence, FMO decided to suspend all activities in Honduras, effective immediately. This means that we will not engage in new projects or commitments and that no disbursements will be made, including the Agua Zarca project. As already announced, a delegation, including our CEO and FMO's director for the Energy Sector, will travel to Honduras and visit the communities around the Agua Zarca project to get a complete understanding of the current situation. FMO has invited NGOs to support it in those efforts. This mission will be undertaken as soon as the safety situation allows for it. We will also do a thorough investigation on all the other projects in Honduras it is involved in. On the basis of each investigation, further decisions will be made on the continued involvement of FMO.

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Finnfund Suspends Disbursements To Honduran Hydropower Project

http://www.development-today.com/magazine/Frontpage/finnfund_suspends_disbursements_to_honduran_dam_project

The Finnish aid-financed investment fund Finnfund is suspending disbursements to the controversial Agua Zarca dam project in Honduras, 12 days after the murder of Berta Cáceres, a leading opponent of the project. The lead lender to Agua Zarca, the Dutch investor FMO, issued a press release Wednesday announcing it was suspending "all activities in Honduras effective immediately", citing "ongoing violence". The CEO of Finnfund Jaakko Kangasniemi confirms to Development Today that Finnfund is following the same line.

Cáceres was a coordinator of the indigenous rights organisation COPINH, which has spearheaded the opposition to Agua Zarca and called on both FMO and Finnfund to divest from the project. "We are suspending disbursements to the project," Kangasniemi says. He stresses that he does not believe there is any link between the project and the death of Cáceres, which he calls "shocking". "We still believe that the people in the affected areas want this project. But at this juncture we have to take a look at the situation," he says.

FMO has invested USD 15 million in Agua Zarca, while Finnfund, the B-lender, has a commitment of USD 5 million in the project.

Kangasniemi says he will be part of a delegation consisting of officials from FMO and Finnfund that will travel to Honduras as soon as the situation allows. Asked whether they plan to meet with COPINH, he says: "We have always expressed a willingness to talk to COPINH ... If it is possible to have a serious discussion and real dialogue, then we are keen to do so."

Much more pressure must be brought to bear on many actors in the “international community” whose “business as usual” economic, political and military relations are the life-blood of the Honduran regime.

250 Organizations Sign Open Letter To U.S. Secretary Of State John Kerry Regarding Assassination Of Berta Cáceres

Please re-send this letter [<http://lawg.org/component/content/article/81/1615>] to your own networks, and to your own Members of Congress, Senators and Parliamentarians (in Canada) demanding that they publicly call for what is set out in the letter.

Suggested Demands To Be Made In The U.S. And Canada

Beyond using and supporting the John Kerry letter, here are immediate and longer term demands.

Based on the fact that since the June 2009 U.S.- and Canadian-backed military coup in Honduras, Honduras has become the murder capital of the world, with the highest rates of State repression, femicide and journalist killings in the Americas, and with endemic corruption and impunity characterizing all branches of the government and State security forces, the U.S. and Canadian governments

Must openly endorse and support the establishment of the independent judicial investigatory commission, under the “auspices” of the OAS, that will actively and directly participate in the legal investigation, process and criminal trial related to the assassination of Berta and attempted assassination of Gustavo. Short of this, there is no chance that justice will be done in Honduras’ corrupted legal system;

Must openly pressure the Honduran regime to release Gustavo Castro, a victim of an attempted assassination at the same time that Berta was assassinated, so that he may return to Mexico to be with his family. Gustavo Castro is participating fully with the albeit manipulated legal investigation, and can continue to do so from Mexico;

Must suspend all U.S. and Canadian government and public support – government and embassy services, investment insurance, etc. – for American and Canadian investors and business operating or looking to operate in Honduras in various spheres of the economy including: fruit plantations, mining, maquiladora sweatshop garment factories, “model cities”, tourism, hydro-electric dams, etc., until a United Nations linked CICIH (International Investigatory Commission into Impunity in Honduras) has been established and is operating, one that would operate in a manner similar or identical to CICIG in Guatemala;

Must establish Senate, Congressional and Parliamentary inquiries (with significant public participation) into the role of the U.S. and Canadian governments during and after the June 2009 military coup in Honduras in terms of: undermining international efforts to achieve the return of the democratic government of President Mel Zelaya; legitimizing, supporting and

working with the post-military coup regimes; supporting and legitimizing the fraudulent and violent “elections” in November 2009; supporting and promoting expanded North American business and investor interests in Honduras in partnership with the post-military coup regimes.

In Canada, there should also be a parliamentary inquiry (with broad public participation) into whether the Free Trade Agreement signed by the Canadian government and post-military coup regimes in Honduras is illegal and illegitimate given that it was “negotiated” and signed with a corrupt, repressive, illegitimate regime.

Tax Deductible Donations in the U.S. and Canada For COPINH and Berta Cáceres’ Family

(Proposal: <http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=e35ee8560f>)

Make checks to "Rights Action" (write “Berta & Copinh” on memo line) and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations:

- Canada: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/rights-action/>
- U.S.: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations> (click on NetworkForGood)

Articles & Information

- Berta Cáceres’ Acceptance Speech, 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize, View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR1kwx8b0ms>
- Murdered for Activism in Honduras, by Silvio Carrillo, Berta’s nephew, March 11, 2016, New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/12/opinion/international/murdered-for-activism-in-honduras.html?emc=edit_tnt_20160311&nid=45556342&tntemail0=y
- Berta Cáceres: Who She Is & What She Lived For, by Grahame Russell, March 3, 2016: <http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=026d1728a3>
- Fight With Joy: Remembering Bertha Cáceres, by [Sandra Cuffe](#), March 7, 2016, <https://intercontinentalcry.org/fight-joy-remembering-bertha-caceres/>
- Eulogy For Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores, by Bev Bell, March 9, 2016, <http://otherworldsarepossible.org/bertha-lives-life-and-legacy-bertha-caceres>
- Blood Flows Where Canadian Capital Goes, by Tyler Shipley, 03/6/2016, <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/blood-flows-where-canadian-capital-goes-371189471.html>

Please share this information far'n'wide.

Grahame Russell

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(Grahame Russell is director of Rights Action. He is back from spending 3 days with Berta Caceres' family in La Esperanza, Intibuca, Honduras, at the burial-commemoration-celebration of Berta. Since 1998, Rights Action has funded and worked closely with Berta and her organization COPINH.)

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