

Rights **Action**

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April 2016

Berta Caceres Lives On, Berta Caceres Is Present!

Berta Caceres Vive, Berta Caceres Presente!



It is with great sadness and anger that we write about the assassination of Honduran woman Berta Caceres, and the attempted assassination of a Mexican man, Gustavo Castro, who was with her at the time. They are courageous, inspiring educators and leaders known across the Americas, and they are very good friends that Rights Action has known and worked with for close to 20 years, particularly Berta.

If you have been donating to Rights Action over the past 20 years, you have been directly supporting Berta and COPINH's work.

- View Berta's speech when accepting the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR1kwx8b0ms>. (Go to www.youtube.com and enter "Berta Caceres acceptance speech, 2015 Goldman Prize ceremony".)

One More Victim Of The 2009 Military Coup

Even as Berta's killing receives enormous attention and condemnation – as it should –, it is also simply and crudely the most recent of hundreds of political killings and assassinations in Honduras since the U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup in 2009. Since the coup, some 14 members of COPINH alone have been killed. Honduras is now known as the 'Murder Capital of the World', and the femicide and journalist-killing, corruption and impunity capital of the Americas!

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS:

Make checks payable to "Rights Action" and mail to the appropriate US or Canadian office.

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Daily News:

- www.democracynow.org
- www.upsidedownworld.org
- www.dominionpaper.ca
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BERTA CACERES: Who She Is & What She Lived For

A reflection by Grahame Russell, March 3, 2016

Berta Caceres, a great Lenca woman from western Honduras, was assassinated early this morning. She was killed because of who she is, because of what she lived, stood and fought for, her whole life. And for her life, *sicarios* (paid assassins) broke into her home in La Esperanza, Intibuca, Honduras, and shot her dead, in the dark of early morning, March 3, 2016.

A mother of four children, a grandmother, a sister and daughter. And, to all who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her, followed her, a *companera*.

Who Killed Her?

She was killed by all those people and economic and political institutions whose greed and interests she lived, stood and fought against. Berta lived against all injustices, all inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities.

She was killed ...

by 500 years of European racist, violent, dispossessing imperialism; by 200 years of U.S. military interventions, exploitation, corruption and impunity; by generations of violent and exploitative, racist and sexist “governments” of Honduras, ... all propped up, all the time, by the “international community”: the United States, Canada, global corporations, the IMF, World Bank, IDB.

Berta was killed ...

by eons of patriarchy, by centuries of racism against the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of Honduras and the Americas; by the greed-conceived and violence-imposed “free trade” agreements of the Americas; by the inherent, endless avarice of global corporations and investors, supported all the time by the wealth and power of rich “democratic” nations (many being members of the exclusive and despicable G8 club) that exploit, repress and denigrate the “third world”, that make, prop up and mock “banana republics”; by the IMF, World Bank, IDB, etc. – institutions created and dominated by those same rich, powerful “democratic” nations.

Berta was killed ...

by corporations and investors who conceive of Honduras and the world – its forests and earth, its natural resources, its rivers, waters and air, its people and all life forms – as exploitable and discardable objects, and then steal, kill and destroy mightily to make their millions and billions; by the infamous banana monopolies (United Fruit Company, etc.) and railway barons of the 1800s and 1900s; by the producers of African palm (World Bank funded Dinant corporation, etc.) and sugarcane for global consumers of “green energies” (ethanol and bio-diesel fuels); by *maquiladora* sweatshop exploiters of cheap labour (Gildan Inc., etc.); by hydro-electric dam companies (DESA Agua Zarca, etc.) profiting from privatized rivers and water sources; by exclusive tourism enclaves (operated by the Canadian Randy “porn king” Jorgensen, etc.) violently evicting indigenous Garifuna peoples from their communal lands on Honduras’ north shore; by mining companies (Goldcorp Inc., etc.) ripping apart Mother Earth for gold profiteers, poisoning the waters of the Siria Valley and the blood of local residents.

Most recently, Berta was killed ...

by the U.S. created, funded and armed “war on drugs” that took undemocratic and unjust, corrupt and violent situations in Honduras (Guatemala, Mexico, etc.) and made them worse, all while drug consumption in the U.S. increases, while profits to the weapons producers increase, while tax-payers’ money increases to militaries and various ‘specialized’ forces increase in a number of countries; by the U.S. and Canadian backed military coup in June 2009, that ousted a democratically elected government and brought back to power the same elites that for so long have dominated and abused Honduras, who – once back in power – took all the above and made it worse again, who use repression as a tool of societal terrorism and control, hiring *sicarios* to target and kill so many hundreds of people since the coup, people like Berta.

The U.S. and Canada helped kill Berta. Seven years after the coup, Honduras has the highest per capita murder rate in the world, and amongst the highest rates of repression, femicide, journalist killings, corruption and impunity in the Americas. Ignoring and even denying all this, the U.S. and Canadian governments sign “free trade” agreements and promote the expansion our mining, tourism, sweatshop, banana, etc. companies and investments.

Berta was killed by all these people, institutions and powerful interest groups because – as anyone will tell you who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her, followed her – these are the things she lived against, stood and struggled against, all her life.

What Did She Live, Stand and Struggle For?

For you and me and everyone. For your rights and mine. For all human rights, collective and individual, of all people, in all countries. For all life forms, and for Mother Earth herself – the earth, fields and forests, the air and water, and all life forms on this most precious and solitary of planets.

Berta lived, stood and struggled for another world is necessary and possible.

What To Do?

We are desperately sorry for Berta’s children, her mother, her sisters and brothers, her family and friends in La Esperanza, and Honduras, and across the Americas. Our hearts are again broken by this global human order we live in. As a part of so many of us dies with Berta, a huge part of Berta lives on.

What to do? Do what Berta would do, what she always did. Live, stand and struggle together. Hold hands. Give one another *abrazos* (hugs). Reach out to and support the so many victims of this global human order. And always live, stand and struggle against all injustices and inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities, and for another world is necessary and possible.

Thank-you Berta. You are so utterly missed. You are so completely loved and respected.

Urgent Action needed – Gustavo Castro

Even as so many people are reeling from the killing of Berta, the other victim – Gustavo Castro – remains detained by the Honduran regime. When Berta was killed, Gustavo was shot and wounded, and is now a surviving eye-witness. Though Castro has cooperated fully with the corrupted judicial authorities (that are already manipulating the “investigation”), the regime is forcing him to remain in Honduras. They will not allow him – victim and witness – to return to his family in Mexico.

- To support effort to secure Gustavo’s safety, release from Honduras, and return home, contact Rights Action, or Other Worlds: www.otherworldsarepossible.org, www.facebook.com/otherworldsarepossible

Pressure Needed in the U.S. and Canada

Serious pressure is needed in the U.S. and Canada. Write to info@rightsaction.org, and we will send you copies of Public Letters calling on the U.S. and Canadian governments to directly pressure the Honduran regime to: -1- let Gustavo Castro go home to Mexico; and -2- to establish an independent international judicial commission to directly join the criminal investigation in Honduras. Short of this, corruption and impunity will prevail again in Honduras.



EMERGENCY FUNDS NEEDED: Berta Caceres' family and COPINH

Funds are needed to support Berta Caceres' family as they respond to this political crime/crisis situation and demand justice for the assassination of Berta and wounding of Gustavo Castro; and to support COPINH's work for justice in this case, and their long-term work for territorial defense and indigenous rights, and fundamental transformation and change in Honduras.

Since the assassination of their mother, Berta's children have been courageously leading – along with other family members and COPINH – efforts to overcome Honduras' deeply entrenched corruption and impunity and ensure that justice is done for the killing of their mother. Please help support them. For foundations and organizations, a full proposal is available on request: info@rightsaction.org.

Thank-you Berta Caceres for your life, work and struggle for another world is necessary and possible.

Thank-you all for your trust in and support for Rights Action's work.

Grahame Russell
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Berta's four children and mother (L-R: Salvador, Berta Mama, Bertita, Olivia, Laura) at an indigenous ceremony for Berta and her family, in the home of Berta Mama, March 6, 2016, in La Esperanza, Honduras.



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