

More threats against COPINH members, Lenca people of Río Blanco

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New death threats in Rio Blanco against COPINH members COPINH demands respect for lives of Lenca people in Río Blanco

COPINH communique, June 21, 2017

Translated by Honduras Resists: <http://hondurasresists.blogspot.com/2017/06/new-death-threats-in-rio-blanco-against.html>

Original en español: <http://copinhonduras.blogspot.com/2017/06/alerta-el-copinh-exige-que-se-respete.html>

COPINH urgently communicates to the national and international community our serious worry about the defenseless state of the Lenca people in Río Blanco, faced with armed men and constant threats. We insist that the authorities take immediate action to protect the physical wellbeing and lives of COPINH members in Río Blanco, who continue to defend their ancestral territory against the invasion of people linked to the DESA corporation.



In recent months, and especially in the past few weeks, the threats against COPINH members have intensified, especially while they are working on their ancestral lands in Vega del Achiotal and Vega del Culatón, sites where the DESA corporation has invaded Lenca territory to build the Agua Zarca project.

The Madrid family, who is originally from Santa Bárbara, illegally took over Lenca territory and sold part of it to the DESA corporation. Several of these people have been employees of the DESA corporation and have been put to work threatening members of COPINH, including our sister Berta Cáceres. We remind you that one of them threatened that they were going to “set things straight with Berta one way or another” just a few months before her [March 3, 2016] assassination and they warned to look out for the consequences.

We denounce that Franklin Madrid has pointed firearms at COPINH members in Río Blanco and fired into the air close to COPINH members while they worked their ancestral lands. The frequency of the threats is increasing and the COPINH members are in a state of complete vulnerability against the armed men who are openly threatening and intimidating them.

Today, June 21st, in the morning hours, several armed men once again threatened COPINH members while they were working at Vega del Culaton. We alert that one of the armed men threatened to kill at any moment the children of Francisco Javier Sánchez, Coordinator of the Indigenous Council of Río Blanco and member of the General Coordination of COPINH.

COPINH has filed complaints with the authorities regarding the threats and destruction of the corn crops, nonetheless, to this day those responsible continue to be free. Instead of penalizing those who make violent threats, the police have instead accompanied them.

We also denounce the responsibility of the Municipality of Intibucá for having illegally granted land rights on ancestral Lenca territory at the Vega del Achiotal, facilitating the invasion of Lenca territory.

We demand that the authorities take immediate action to secure the life and physical wellbeing of the Lenca people of Río Blanco and to resolve the situations denounced by COPINH. We call on the national and international community to speak with the Honduran authorities and embassies to demand that they Honduran state take immediate action and prosecute those who are threatening the Lenca people with firearms.

- Oscar Chinchilla, Attorney General - 504-2221-3099
- Julian Pacheco, Secretary of Security – 504-9456-3699
- National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH) - Tegucigalpa: 504-2231-0204, central@conadeh.hn; Intibucá: 504-2783-0039, intibuca@conadeh.hn

No more martyrs!

We demand immediate action before it is too late.

Berta lives on, COPINH is still strong!

With the ancestral strength of Berta, Lempira, Mota and Etempica, we raise our voices full of life, justice, dignity, freedom and peace!

More information

- Honduras Resists, <http://hondurasresists.blogspot.com/>
- Honduras Solidarity Network, <http://www.hondurassolidarity.org/>
- Witness for Peace, <http://witnessforpeace.org/>
- Rights Action

COPINH (Honduras coordinator of indigenous and popular organizations)

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web: copinh.org

blog: copinhonduras.blogspot.com

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