

Berta Caceres: Who She Is & What She Lived For

By Grahame Russell, March 2, 2018

(Slightly edited; first published after Berta's assassination, March 2, 2016)

(<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/berta-caceres-who-she-is-what-she-lived-for>)



March 2, 2018 marks the second anniversary of the assassination of Berta Caceres. In the Honduras of today, in the U.S. and Canadian-backed repressive and violent, undemocratic and corrupt Honduras of today, no justice has predictably been done for the well planned, well paid for killing of Berta, let alone the assassinations and killings of many hundreds of Hondurans since the 2009 military coup.

Berta, a Lenca woman from Honduras, was assassinated around midnight, March 2, 2016. She was targeted and killed because of who she is, and what she lived and fought for, her whole life.

For the life she lived, *sicarios* (paid assassins) broke into her home in La Esperanza, Intibuca, and shot her. At the same time, the assassins attempted to kill Gustavo Castro, a Mexican human rights defender visiting Berta and her organization COPINH. Hit by two bullets, Gustavo survived -barely- by playing dead.

Who Killed Berta?

Berta was a mother of four, a grandmother, a daughter, a sister, a grand-daughter, and - to all who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her - a *companera*. She was killed by all those people, countries and institutions whose greed and violence 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 racist, violent, dispossessing European 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 propped up by the “international community” (the U.S., Canada, global corporations, IMF, World Bank, ...).

Berta was killed ...

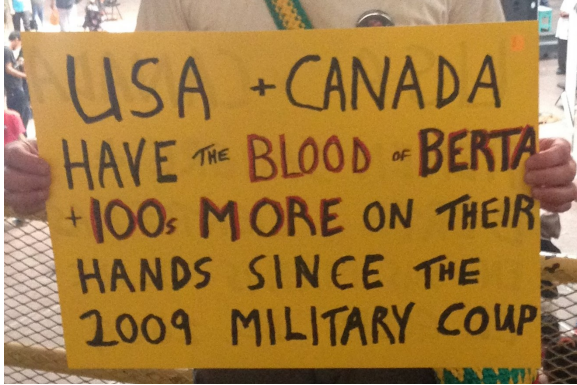
- by eons of patriarchy, and centuries of racism against the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of the Americas;
- by the violently imposed “free trade” agreements of the Americas;
- by the inherent avarice of corporations and investors from the powerful, rich “democratic” nations (including, most obviously, members of the harmful 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 these same rich, powerful “democratic” nations.

Berta was killed ...

- by corporations and investors who conceive of Honduras and the world – its forests and earth, its rivers, water and air, its people and all life forms – as exploitable and discardable objects, and who steal, kill and destroy mightily to make their millions and billions;
- by the 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* garment factory exploiters of cheap labour (Gildan Activewear and Hanesbrand Inc., etc.);
- by hydro-electric dam companies (DESA Agua Zarca, etc.) profiting from privatized rivers and water sources;
- by tourism enclaves (operated by the Canadian Randy “porn king” Jorgensen, etc.) illegally and violently evicting Garifuna peoples from communal lands;
- by mining companies (Goldcorp Inc., Aura Minerals, etc.) ripping the earth for gold, poisoning the waters of the Siria Valley and the blood of local residents, evicting entire communities and even the dead from the 200 year old cemetery in Azacualpa.

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, while drug consumption in the U.S. increases, while profits to weapons producers increase, while tax-payers’ money flows increasingly to fund militaries and ‘specialized’ forces;
- by the U.S. and Canadian backed military coup in June 2009 that ousted the democratically elected government of President Zelaya 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, using repression as a tool of societal control, hiring *sicarios* to target and kill hundreds of people since the coup, people like Berta.



Nine 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.

Berta was killed by all these people and countries, by these economic, military and political institutions and interests because - as anyone who knew her will tell you, as anyone who learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her, followed her, will tell you - these are the things she lived, marched and struggled against.

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 Mother Earth herself – the fields and forests, 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 remain completely sad for this great crime and loss, for Berta's children, mother, sisters and brothers, for her family and friends in La Esperanza, Honduras, and across the Americas.

Yet, as a part of many of us died with Berta, a part of Berta lives on.

What to do? Do what Berta would do, as she always did. Live, stand and struggle together. Hold hands. Reach out to and support the so many victims of this global human order. 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 missed, loved, forever respected.

Grahame Russell

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(I met Berta in 1998. Rights Action has supported COPINH and Berta's work and struggle since that time. Berta and her family are friends.)

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Since Berta's assassination, Rights Action has continued supporting Berta's family, COPINH and Gustavo Castro, as they demand truth and justice in her and Gustavo's case, and as they work for 'another world is possible'. Make checks to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
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