

Reference: B1743

Ambassador Roberto Ochoa Madrid
Embassy of Honduras to the Kingdom of
Belgium and Mission of Honduras to the
European Union.

Avenue de Cortenbergh 89
1000 Brussels
Belgium

14 March 2016

Dear Ambassador Ochoa Madrid,

We are writing you to express our deep concern for the situation of human rights defenders working on land, territory and environmental issues in Honduras. We particularly condemn the murder on Thursday, 3 March 2016 of human rights defender Berta Cáceres.

Berta Cáceres was part of the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (COPINH). This defender's work to promote human rights was particularly well known in connection to the Agua Zarca dam project on the Río Blanco in Intibucá. Due to their activities protecting the rights of indigenous communities, territory and natural resources, Berta Cáceres and other colleagues in COPINH for years have received constant threats, attempts to criminalize their work and physical attacks. Because of this risk to her life, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted her precautionary measures, which were expanded on June 29, 2009.

The State of Honduras has the international obligation to guarantee the life and safety of human rights defenders. For this reason, we call on the authorities to:

- Carry out an impartial, thorough and timely investigation into the murder of defender Berta Cáceres. This inquiry must investigate the connection between her murder and her work as a human rights defender.
- Abstain from making statements that explicitly or implicitly attribute guilt to the victim or automatically disconnect this atrocious crime with her work as a defender.
- Publically condemn this murder and all forms of violence against people who are promoting issues related to the defense of the environment, territory or land.
- Take measures to protect the members of COPINH and the family of Berta Cáceres, in accordance with their wishes.
- Take measures to protect the life and integrity of the only survivor witness

Following on the condemnation of Berta Cáceres' killing by many international actors, we likewise urge your counterparts in the European Union and its member states to remain in pro-active dialogue with you and the Honduran authorities on

this case and to provide full political support and protection for other members of COPINH and all other Honduran HRDs in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,



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Director
Amnesty International European Institutions Office



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General Director
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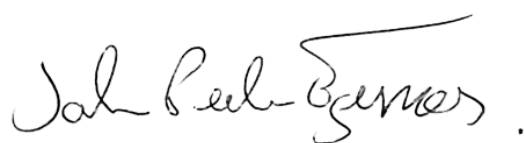
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