

Recipient of the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize Killed

Berta Cáceres, Director of COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras), was assassinated this morning between 1 and 2 am. Gunmen entered her home and shot her. She had been assisting the indigenous Lenca communities in their struggle for rights to their land. The struggle has been a bitter one against the Honduran government and foreign companies usurping the rivers, in particular the Rio Gualcarque near the community of Rio Blanco where a hydroelectric project has been in development without the indigenous community's consent.



Honduras Solidarity Network's photo.

Berta Cáceres and COPINH have been accompanying various land struggles throughout western Honduras. In the last few weeks, violence and repression towards Berta, COPINH, and the communities they support, had escalated.

In Rio Blanco on February 20th, Berta, COPINH, and the community of Rio Blanco faced threats and repression as they carried out a peaceful action to protect the River Gualcarque against the construction of a hydroelectric dam by the internationally-financed Honduran company DESA. As a result of COPINH's work supporting the Rio Blanco struggle, Berta had received countless threats against her life and was granted precautionary measures by the InterAmerican Commission for Human Rights.

On February 25th, another Lenca community supported by COPINH in Guise, Intibuca was violently evicted and destroyed.

It is urgent to demand a thorough and immediate investigation of the circumstances surrounding Berta's death.

COPINH will send out more information as it becomes available. Berta's death is a devastating loss for the fight for dignity and justice of the Lenca people and for the social and grassroots movement in Honduras.

Information provided by the Honduras Solidarity Network