

From Cuba, we condemn the political assassination of Berta Cáceres, people's leader in Honduras

Havana, March 3, 2016

Source : <http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2016/03/03/desde-cuba-condenan-asesinato-de-berta-caceres/>

We of the social and mass organizations of the Cuban Revolution, we who accompany efforts linked with the struggle for social justice and unity among our peoples, express our most profound indignation and firm condemnation of the assassination of our sister Berta Cáceres. We travel the road of dignity and hope, and we share the battle against imperialism and oppression at the side of our brothers and sisters of the movements and organizations for the people in Latin America and the Caribbean. Berta Cáceres was the leader of the Lenca community, coordinator of the Civic Council of People's and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, (COPINH in its Spanish-language initials), and a defender of human rights.

We awoke with the sad news of one more very painful happening in Honduras. It too is hard, just like all news taking hold of us about the process of change beginning in that Central American country. Today it's a question of a beloved combatant in social struggle who died not from natural causes but through inhuman greed, really from the silencing of those capable of lifting up oppressed peoples. Thugs who are afraid because we are not afraid!

This atrocious act once more demonstrates that death threats against those who defend human and environmental rights – they are always there in the background - have not ended. In fact they are growing in that Central American country. This political crime constitutes an affront not just for Honduras but for all peoples of the continent and in the world.

According to the Global Witness report "How Many More?" ("¿Cuántos más?"), there were 111 assassinations of environmental activists in Honduras between 2002 and 2014.(1) More than 80 of them took place in the past three years and in the Bajo Aguán area. That region was where Berta Cáceres put her life in danger. For her, threats and acts of harassment were never far off. The Lenca indigenous communities, who live in Western Honduras, fight in defense of their ancestral territory which they view as threatened by hydroelectric projects and by mineral concessions approved despite no previous consultation with the people.

Judy in sending the article on Berta Cáceres to Walter Lippmann I made changes. The first revised paragraph, below, is midway down the translation. The second one is at the end. If they could be inserted in the posted version
Thanks, Tom

We demand that the intellectual authors [of the murder] and those who carried it out be punished under the full weight of the law. May this regrettable political assassination not end in impunity. May there be no more criminalization of social protest in Honduras .

The sorrow we share on the assassination of our beloved comrade Bertica reaches all families, friends, and comrades in struggle, and the people of Honduras. May they accept the burden that goes along with the most vigorous rejection of this crime that offends us. And we commit ourselves more and more each day to follow at the side of the lowly, battling for the lowly.

Bertica, as we always call her, knew how to win the affection and respect of those who had the privilege of knowing her. She knew how to defend the rights of women, of indigenous peoples, and small farmers. She fortified their sense of justice. She gave her very fruitful life for them prematurely. Neither harassments, nor persecution, nor threats could deter her firm determination. Her only armament was her voice; she never walked around with weapons. They threatened her and they assassinated her on account of her capacity for resisting, for bringing people together, and for winning.

In the Lenca tradition, feminine spirits live in the rivers and women are their main protectors. For this crucial cause, she received the Goldman Environmental Prize for 2015, the world's top recognition for environmental activism and for the defense of nature. On receiving that well-deserved award, she denounced continuing threats to her personal integrity and that of her family.

As part of her active role inside the process of accompaniment and social commitment, she incorporated the network "Cry of the Excluded" and the "Continental Linkage of Social Movements with ALBA," among other organizations oriented towards unity.

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Today the rivers of Honduras, those connecting with the plains and mountains, connecting with blood spilled from its noblest sons and daughters, and connecting with the open veins of Latin America, are weeping. They weep for the physical absence now of one of their most firm and consistent guardians.

The crime and injustice reaffirm to us that there remains no way but to continue the struggle.

Judgment and punishment for cowardly assassins!

Berta lives, the struggle goes on!

Berta Cáceres, PRESENTE!

Towards victory, always!

This declaration was just made public at the vigil for Berta Cáceres celebrated at the headquarters of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center [in Havana.] It was a vigil too for continuation of antiimperialist struggle.

We who belong to the Cuban Chapter of the Union (Articulacion) of Social Movements subscribe to the declaration:

Martin Luther King Jr. Center

Organization of Solidarity with Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America(OSPAAAL)

Cuban Workers' Central

National Association of Small Farmers

Federation of Cuban Women

University Student Federation

Latin American and Caribbean Continental Students' Organization (OCLAE)

Network in Defense of Humanity - Cuba

Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples

Cuban Movement for Peace and for solidarity of the Peoples.

GALFISA Group/ Cuban Institute of Philosophy

End note:

1. For a summary of this report, and link to the original version, go to: <http://www.accion13.org.co/3CuartasPartesDeAsesinatosDeAmbientalistasOcurrenEnAmericaLatina.htm>

Translated by Tom Whitney

DESDE CUBA CONDENAMOS EL ASESINATO POLITICO DE LA DIRIGENTE POPULAR HONDUREÑA BERTA CACERES

Las organizaciones sociales y de masas de la Revolución Cubana que acompañamos los esfuerzos articuladores y de lucha por la justicia social y unidad entre nuestros pueblos, que recorremos el camino de la dignidad y la esperanza, quienes compartimos la batalla contra el imperialismo y la opresión al lado de nuestros hermanos y hermanas de las organizaciones y movimientos populares en América Latina y el Caribe, manifestamos nuestra más profunda indignación y firme condena por el asesinato de la líder de la comunidad lenca, coordinadora del Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) y defensora de los derechos humanos, nuestra hermana Berta Cáceres.

Amanecemos con la triste noticia de otro muy doloroso suceso en Honduras, duro como aquel que nos arrebató a ese país centroamericano de su incipiente proceso de cambios. Hoy se trata de una querida luchadora social, que no ha fallecido por causas de naturaleza humana, sino por la inhumana voracidad de silenciar a quienes son capaces de levantar a los pueblos oprimidos. Sicarios que sienten miedo porque no tenemos miedo.

Este suceso atroz demuestra una vez más que las amenazas de muerte contra defensores y defensoras de los derechos sociales y medioambientales se mantienen latentes, no han cesado, crecen en ese país centroamericano. Este crimen político constituye una afrenta no solo para Honduras, sino para todos los pueblos del continente y del mundo.

Según el Informe ¿Cuántos más? de Global Witness, entre 2002 y 2014 se produjeron 111 asesinatos de activistas ambientales en territorio hondureño. Más de 80 tuvieron lugar sólo en los últimos tres años en el Bajo Aguán, región donde Berta Cáceres puso en peligro su vida y no fue ajena a actos de hostigamiento y amenazas. Las comunidades indígenas lencas, quienes habitan el occidente hondureño, luchan en defensa de su territorio ancestral que se ve amenazado por proyectos hidroeléctricos y concesiones mineras aprobados sin previa consulta popular.

Exigimos que los autores intelectuales y materiales sean castigados con todo el peso de la ley. Que este lamentable asesinato político no quede impune. Que cese en Honduras la criminalización de la protesta social.

Bertica, como la llamaremos siempre, supo ganarse el cariño y respeto de quienes tuvimos el privilegio de conocerla. Supo defender los derechos de las mujeres, de los indígenas, de los campesinos, arraigó el sentido de la justicia, y por ellos entregó prematuramente su muy fértil vida. Ni hostigamientos, ni persecución, ni amenazas pudieron detener su firme determinación. Su única arma era la voz, nunca anduvo armada, la amenazaron y asesinaron por su capacidad para resistir, convocar y vencer.

En la tradición lenca, en los ríos residen los espíritus femeninos y las mujeres son sus principales guardianas. Por esta decisiva causa recibió el Premio Medioambiental Goldman del año 2015, el máximo reconocimiento mundial para activistas del medio ambiente y la defensa de la naturaleza. Al recibir ese justo galardón, denunció las constantes amenazas a su integridad personal y de su familia.

En su activo rol dentro del proceso de acompañamiento y compromiso social integró la red Grito de los Excluidos y la Articulación Continental de Movimientos Sociales hacia el ALBA, entre otros espacios de unidad.

Llegue a todos los familiares, amigos, compañeros de lucha, y al pueblo de Honduras el dolor que compartimos por el asesinato de nuestra querida compañera Bertica, reciban el pesar que va acompañado del más enérgico rechazo al crimen que nos indigna y nos compromete, cada día más, a seguir al lado de los humildes, batallando para los humildes.

Hoy los ríos de Honduras –esos que conectan con los llanos y montañas, con la sangre derramada por sus más nobles hijos, con las venas abiertas de América Latina– lloran. Lloran por la ausencia física de una de sus más firmes y consecuentes guardianas.

El crimen y la injusticia nos reafirman que no queda otro camino que continuar la lucha.

¡Juicio y castigo a los cobardes asesinos!

¡Berta vive, la lucha sigue!

¡Berta Cáceres, PRESENTE!

¡HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE!

La Habana, 3 de marzo de 2016

La presente declaración de condena acaba de hacerse pública en la vigilia por Berta Cáceres y por la continuidad de la lucha ant imperialista, celebrada en la sede del Centro Memorial Martin Luther King Jr.

La suscriben por el Capítulo Cubano de las articulaciones de movimientos sociales a las que pertenecemos:

- Centro Memorial Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Organización de Solidaridad de los Pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina / OSPAAAL
- Central de Trabajadores de Cuba
- Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños
- Federación de Mujeres Cubanas
- Federación Estudiantil Universitaria
- Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes / OCLAE
- Red en Defensa de la Humanidad – Cuba
- Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos
- Movimiento Cubano por la Paz y la Soberanía de los Pueblos
- Grupo GALFISA / Instituto de Filosofía de Cuba