

From: [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA)
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 9:59 AM
To: [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS);
[REDACTED] (EEAS)
Subject: Fwd: Information on EU action before and after the killing of Berta Cáceres

Dear colleagues,

Please find below an overview of our actions since Thursday on the Berta Cáceres case that I have shared with member states.

Hopefully this would also be helpful for you.

If you wish please share with our new managing director.

Best

[REDACTED]

Enviado desde mi iPhone

Inicio del mensaje reenviado:

De: "[REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA)" <[REDACTED]@eeas.europa.eu>
Fecha: 10 de marzo de 2016 02:31:06 GMT+1
Asunto: Information on EU action before and after the killing of Berta Cáceres

Dear colleagues,

As you all know the human rights defender and environmentalist Berta Cáceres was killed on the early morning of Thursday 3 March. Indeed many of you have been in contact with me since immediately after the tragic event and certainly I and the EU Delegation in Honduras have been working non stop since then to follow up.

For your information I have gathered some information below on the extensive actions that the EU has carried out both after and prior to her death. Hopefully this is helpful for your own

work, including in replying to questions and requests from different stakeholders. Please note that this is not a report on the events themselves, but merely on the main aspects of the EU response.

First on the actions following the tragic killing of Berta Cáceres:

As I was informed already in the very early morning, only a few hours after her killing, we immediately initiated a local EU statement that was approved in record time and published the same morning. At 9 am same Thursday I furthermore along with the Spanish Ambassador attended an event on the penal code with the National Congress and the Supreme Court where in the presence of all main media in Honduras. Here, backed by the Spanish Ambassador, I strongly condemned the killing and asked for swift and impartial investigations to seek justice. These remarks provoked similar expressions from representatives from the National Congress and the Supreme Court. Also I repeated the same message to media in numerous individual interviews. Further EU statements were launched (including on social media) both locally and from Brussels during Thursday and the following days. A statement from G16, currently chaired by the EU, was published on Friday.

During Thursday we furthermore were in contact with high authorities directly to express similar messages. Also, I was in direct contact with a number of European and national NGO's and human rights defenders throughout the day (and until now) to discuss developments and possible follow up. Late in the evening of Thursday I talked to the mother and daughter of Berta to express my condolences and to ask if they wished my presence at the wake the following day (to which they both answered positively).

On Friday morning, in spite of concerns, I then attended the wake in Esperanza (some 3,5 hours from Tegucigalpa) together with the US Ambassador. What initially seemed a very tense atmosphere with certain expressions of anger from the extensive crowd (mainly against the government, but also targeting the US and transnational companies) resulted in a positive reception by the family and the local community. The mother and brother received us warmly. I made a statement where I expressed condolences from the EU and its Member States. As requested by many I mentioned that endless EU countries had asked me to express condolences. I furthermore stated that since we had accompanied Berta when alive, I wished to be here to accompany her and her grieving family as a friend at this difficult time too. The wake was widely covered by national and international media. Later it was reported that the mayor had been welcomed less warmly by an angry crowd.

The same Friday the Foreign Minister informed the diplomatic community. A representative from the EU Delegation attended along with resident EU Ambassadors. Most notable from this event was probably the demand from the Mexican Ambassador to allow the Mexican human rights defender and only witness, Mr [REDACTED], to leave the country.

The following days since the initial events we have been in constant contact with main stakeholders. This includes daily contact with foreign affairs, but also the human rights ombudsman, and others. A main concern remains securing a thorough and comprehensive investigation as well as the security of Mr. [REDACTED]

Several other expressions have followed, including a very strong message from EP President Schulz and an open letter from EP VP Lunacek.

It goes without saying that we continue to follow up on events to our best ability.

Now on the actions prior to the killing of Berta Cáceres

It is important to stress that we as the EU did support Berta Cáceres and her defence for human rights since long before her tragic death with actions taken within the local human rights strategy and strategy to support human rights defenders.

Thus, Berta Cáceres was in fact the very first human rights defender to attend our so-called "Grupo Enlace" where human rights cases and issues are discussed at ambassadors level and followed up on with authorities (later expanded to including the UN resident representative). Already at this point the EU Delegation had made a successful call to annul the arrest warrant against her a few weeks earlier. As a result of the meeting it was agreed that EU ambassadors would visit Berta Cáceres and her organisation COPINH in Esperanza/Intibucá to accompany her publicly and to show support for the defence of human rights. This was done later. Other mutual visits have taken place.

Just a couple of weeks before her death another "Grupo Enlace" meeting on indigenous peoples rights was carried out and in response a letter signed by the EU HoD was sent only a few days prior to her death to the Foreign Minister stressing the importance of the matter in general and requesting information of the situation regarding a number of specific cases in particular.

In a broader sense, through the Grupo Enlace, but also through continuous dialogue with the government and by specific initiatives, the EU Delegation is following up on human rights cases on a daily basis. This implies various specific actions ranging from several ongoing emergency supports, public statements, visiting human rights defenders and more widely supporting stronger capacity in the country. A similarly disturbing – albeit less covered – example includes the LGBTBI community that the EU HoD accompanied in a public press conference the week before Berta Cáceres death denouncing the deaths of several members of the LGBTBI community, including a leading member of the NGO Arcoiris.

Closely coordinated with these actions, the EU continues to support human rights through extensive development cooperation programmes. Examples include the PADH Human rights programmes, Eurojusticia and numerous EIDHR activities. These programmes support key national institutions and civil society, including establishment of national policies, investigative capacity, the law for human rights defenders, follow up to the UPR, emergency support and campaign for human rights defenders. The issue of indigenous peoples rights and land issues is furthermore a key component of our extensive forestry programmes and the ongoing AVA-FLEGT negotiations.

At the local level of the region where Berta Cáceres lived, the EU has furthermore supported a number of projects in 2015 and 2016 (of which some have ended and others are ongoing). These include forestry, support for better eco ovens for poor families, development of tourism, identity and arts crafts for indigenous peoples, food security, support for disabled people and human rights and dialogue. The EU does not as such support the energy projects that Berta Cáceres protested most vigorously, although there are European investors involved.

This does not pretend to be an all-encompassing report, and surely I could have added more detail if time had allowed, but hopefully you will find this useful as a quick introduction to our doings as the EU around the very regrettable killing of an emblematic human rights defender.

Best



HoD/Ambassador, Honduras