

From: [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA)

Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2016 7:57 PM

To: [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (EEAS); [REDACTED] (CAB-MOGHERINI); [REDACTED] (COMM); [REDACTED] (COMM)

Cc: [REDACTED] (DEVCO); [REDACTED] (DEVCO); [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA); [REDACTED] (DEVCO); [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA); [REDACTED] (EEAS-TEGUCIGALPA); [REDACTED] (EEAS)

Subject: Latest on the killing of prominent human rights defender Berta Cáceres/Honduras

Importance: High

Dear colleagues,

As reported earlier today the prominent human rights defender Berta Cáceres was killed early Thursday morning.

As a response a local EU statement has been issued immediately and I have given interviews to all main media (along the same line) as I was attending a major event this morning. I recommend that a statement at HQ level would be issued too.

President Juan Orlando has furthermore issued a statement (see attached) where he describes the crime as a direct attack on the state of Honduras and its people. He furthermore promises a swift investigation.

This is what we know at this point:

According to different sources Berta Cáceres was murdered early Thursday morning, when one or more perpetrators broke into the house where she slept. Some claim she was shot, but this is unconfirmed.

Berta Cáceres, a mother of four children, was the leader of the indigenous rights and environmentalist NGO, COPINH, defending in particular the rights of the Lenca people. She was the winner of the Goldman Foundation Environmental Prize for 2015.

Prior to her death, tensions had again been building up in the area (outside Intibucá) where an energy project has caused conflict over land rights and environmental impact. The project,

managed by a company called DESA, is supported by Dutch and Finnish funding (FMO and FinnFund). I have been in touch with ambassadors from both countries and they are now aware of the case. Previously the conflict has led to the killing of fellow COPINH member Tomás García (in 2013).

According to government sources the authorities are taking the situation very seriously and have deployed a specialized investigation unit (see statement from the president).

Berta Cáceres was under special protection (medidas cautelares). Thus, one of the main unanswered questions is why she was not protected better by authorities at the time of her death.

The EU has followed her case very closely during the last years. Thus, she has participated in our local human rights platform – Grupo Enlace – and we have engaged on numerous occasions on her case, including when a very questionable arrest warrant was issued (after our contact with authorities it was annulled). We have furthermore visited her at the COPINH office during a joint field trip of EU ambassadors in 2015.

We will keep you informed of new development.

For those that wish to dig deeper please find below some different sources:

[National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras \(COPINH\)](#)

<http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/berta-caceres/>

http://defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2966:dictan-sobreseimiento-definitivo-a-berta-caceres&Itemid=159

<http://www.copinh.org/article/copinhurgente-llamamos-a-la-solidaridad-pronunciar/>

<http://www.soaw.org/about-us/equipo-sur/263-stories-from-honduras/4121-berta>

<http://business-humanrights.org/en/honduras-agua-zarca-dam-construction-leads-to-violence-intimidation-against-lenca-indigenous-communities-ngo-says#c77673>

<http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16740&LangID=S>

<http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/Honduras-es-2015.pdf>

Best regards,



HoD/Honduras