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## Justice for the COPINH, the family of Berta Cáceres and Gustavo Castro

*Press Release, Mexico, March 9, 2016*

Early in the morning on Thursday March 3rd, our Honduran comrade Berta Cáceres and Mexican Gustavo Castro were attacked in the town of La Esperanza, Honduras, where Berta sadly died and Gustavo Castro was injured. Since that time, Gustavo Castro was designated as a “protected witness” by the Honduran government.

Gustavo Castro has cooperated with all of the attorney’s requests despite his physical and psychological state. Gustavo Castro is a victim of an attempted murder in a country that the Inter American Court on Human Rights (IACHR) has called the country “with the highest number of assassinations per capita of environment and land defenders.” It is enough to point out that, with Bertha’s assassination, five members of the Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) have now been killed.

As a result, the IACHR has issued precautionary measures for the family of Bertha Cáceres, members of COPINH and Gustavo Castro. On Sunday March 5th, precautionary measure No. 112-16 was issued ordering the Honduran government to adopt the necessary measures so that members of the COPINH can undertake their activities as human rights defenders without being subjected to violence, threats and harassment; to guarantee Castro Soto’s security during the entire process of preparing for and departing from Honduras; to open a line of coordinated investigation by independent organizations that would avoid the criminalization that had been the focus of the Honduran state’s process until now.

The case of Berta Cáceres and the members of COPINH are added to a long list of threats and assassinations of human rights defenders and of defenders of the land throughout Latin America. Indigenous and campesino communities and peoples are victims of dispossession from their lands being imposed by private capital, both domestic and foreign, that has generated tremendous resistance in confrontation with both companies and governments that allow the companies to position themselves with impunity. COPINH and the Lenca people are a tremendous example of struggle in defense of life and territory. In this context, they had denounced Energy Development Company S.A. (DESA) that was trying to build the ‘Agua Zarca’ hydroelectric project on the

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Gualcarque River.

We demand:

1. That the state of Honduras implement the precautionary measures issued by the IACHR and that the members of COPINH, family of Bertha and Gustavo Castro be protected;
2. That the migration alert against Gustavo Castro be revoked, enabling his immediate departure from Honduras;
3. That the Mexican government continue to work in favor of Gustavo Castro and reinforce all of the measures at its reach to guarantee his protection, his departure from Honduras and his work as a defender of land and human rights.

**Justice for Berta Cáceres!**

**Stop the criminalization of members of COPINH!**

**Justice for the Lenca people!**