



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**

for the people | for the planet | for the future

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Brussels, 9th March 2016

To the President of Honduras
To the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico
To the National Human Rights Commission of Mexico
To the Vice-Minister for Human Rights and Justice of Honduras
To the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Honduras
To the Ambassador of Honduras to Belgium and the European Union

I am writing on behalf of Friends of the Earth Europe, part of Friends of the Earth International, the largest federation of grassroots environmental groups in the world.

I would like to emphasise the Friends of the Earth network's growing **concern about the safety of human rights defender Gustavo Castro de Soto** from Friends of the Earth Mexico, who was injured during the assassination of the internationally-renowned human rights and environment defender and Lenca indigenous people's leader **Berta Cáceres** on March 3rd in La Esperanza, Intibucá, Honduras.

I am concerned to learn that Honduran Attorney General has decided to prolong the migration alert that impedes Gustavo Castro Soto from leaving Honduras for another thirty days, and strongly reject this decision, which is unjustified and unnecessary. Gustavo Castro has provided sufficient information to the Attorney's office to help clarify what took place. Additionally, he has not been informed about which other procedures remain to be carried out.

On March 6th, the Honduran Attorney General verbally assured Gustavo Castro, when he was in the Mexican Embassy in Tegucigalpa, that he would be able to leave the country after extending his testimony on March 7th in La Esperanza.

By being held up for longer in Honduras, Gustavo Castro is not being treated as a victim of an attempted assassination, rather **his life is being put at risk** and his right to free circulation is being violated.

It is important to emphasise that the environmentalist and coordinator of Otros Mundos A.C./Friends of the Earth Mexico has never refused to collaborate with the Attorney's office in order to clarify the facts regarding the murder of Lenca indigenous people's leader Berta Cáceres, coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH).

Together with COPINH, we demand that the investigation be oriented to look into the responsibility of the company Energy Development Company S.A. (DESA), promoter of the 'Agua Zarca' hydroelectric project against which COPINH has been fighting with dignity for years. At the same time, it is necessary to position Berta and COPINH's struggle in defence of land and territory against diverse companies as the motivation for Berta's brutal assassination.

We thank the Mexican Embassy in Honduras, in particular the Ambassador Dolores Jiménez, who has channelled all her energy and influence since March 3rd into trying to ensure the physical and psychological integrity of Gustavo Castro and to allow him to return to Mexico. It is important that the Ambassador keep up this diplomatic activity in defence of the human rights of the environmentalist.

We demand that the Government of Mexico take stronger and more forceful actions to guarantee that the Government of Honduras will guarantee the immediate departure of Gustavo from Honduras.

Yours faithfully,



Magda Stoczkiewicz
Director of Friends of the Earth Europe