

## **Berta Caceres: Who She Is & What She Lived For**

By Grahame Russell, March 2, 2023

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/berta-caceres-7th-anniversary>

### **7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her assassination by U.S. & Canadian-backed Honduran regime**

March 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Berta Caceres and attempted assassination of Gustavo Castro, shot and left for dead that same night.



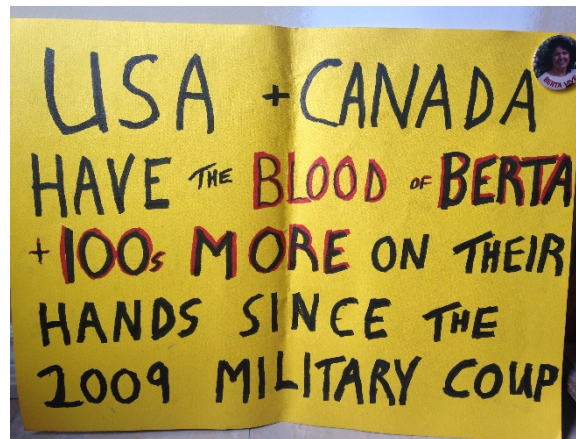
Today is one more day – a very moving day - that I re-dedicate myself, and the work we do at our small organization, to exposing the truth about brutal regimes that the U.S. and Canada (and other rich, powerful actors in the so-called “international community”) support, prop up, put in power around the world, calling them “democratic allies”, simply because these regimes – such as the recent Honduran regime that killed Berta and so many more – benefit the economic and political interests of the U.S., Canada and “international community”.

### **Berta, victim of U.S. and Canadian-backed regime**

In the aftermath of the January 27, 2022 ouster of the U.S. and Canadian-backed regime from power, former President Juan Orlando Hernandez

(eight years a staunch “democratic allie” of Canada and the U.S.) sits in jail in the U.S. awaiting trial for being the head of a Honduran government-supported, drug-trafficking cartel!

It bears repetition - again and again - that Berta Caceres is a victim of the U.S. and Canadian-backed coup in 2009, and of 13 years of full U.S. and Canadian political, economic and military support for military-backed, drug-trafficking, ‘open-for-global-business’ regimes in Honduras.



### **Berta**

In early 2016, Berta had recently moved into her own house in La Esperanza, Honduras, near where she and her children had lived with her mother, Mama Berta.

Late on March 2, 2016, into the morning of March 3, a team of assassins broke into her home and shot her dead.

Unbeknownst to the killers, who had been long planning Berta’s death, Gustavo, a Mexican friend and human rights and environmental defender, was staying with her. After shooting Berta, when the killers found him in the guest room, they shot him twice. Gustavo “played dead”, lying in his own blood, as the killers fled into the night.

**Honduras: Blood and the Water  
Assassinations of Berta Caceres and Gregorio Chavez**

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/faultlines/2016/09/honduras-blood-water-160920064355648.html>

Seven 3 years later, no justice has been done for the “intellectual authors” of Berta’s assassination – the elite economic and political sectors who decided she needed to be killed, and paid for it.

Attention is directed at members of the Atala Zablah family, one of the elite oligarchic families that backed the 2009 military coup, and saw their wealth increase during the 12 years and 7 months of ‘open-for-global-business’ regimes in power.

In 2018, due to the tenacity and courage of Berta’s organization COPINH, as well as Berta’s family, supporters and allies, eight men were found guilty of being the “material authors” - members of the assassination team assembled and paid to kill her.

Securing justice against the intellectual elites is spectacularly difficult in large part because, until January 27, 2022, when the regime of Juan Orlando Hernandez was ousted from power, Honduras’ political and economic elites maintained full relations with and support from the governments of the U.S., Canada, Spain and E.U., with the World Bank, IMF and numerous global corporations.

Since the 2009 coup, over 1000 Hondurans were killed for political reasons – the assassination of Berta the most widely known case. But for the jailing of eight “material authors” of Berta’s assassination, no justice has been done for any of the political killings and repression (torture, illegal jailings, beatings and maimings) that occurred during this time.

### **Berta Cáceres Archives**

Information in this archive includes books, films and articles Berta; efforts led by COPINH, family members of Berta and their supporters, to expose the truth about and achieve justice for who planned and paid for Berta to be assassinated.

<https://rightsaction.org/berta-caceres-archives>

### ***Que companera mas companera***

Berta – born in 1971 - was a mother of four, grandmother, daughter, sister and - to all who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her - a *companera*.

She was singled out, targeted and killed because of who she is, what she lived for, and what she worked and fought for, her whole life.



Berta's mother (Maria Austra / a.k.a. Mama Berta) and children (Olivia, Laura, Bertita, Salvador) in front.  
Brother Roberto and others in behind

## Who Killed Berta?

Since her early teens, Berta followed the life path of her mother and some of her siblings.

Berta lived and worked against all injustices, all inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities.

Berta was killed by a team of paid assassins –*sicarios*– working for the elite economic, military and political sectors of Honduras. She was killed by all these elites, and by all those countries and other 'international actors' that supported the military-backed, 'open-for-global-business' regimes in power.

Berta worked against, and was killed by ...

- 500 years of racist, violent, dispossessing European imperialism and colonialism
- 200 years of U.S. military interventions, exploitation, corruption and impunity
- Generations of violent and exploitative governments of Honduras propped up by the U.S.-led "international community" (Canada, global corporations and investors, IMF, World Bank, etc.)
- Centuries of patriarchy and violence against women and girls
- Centuries of racism against the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of the Americas

- The greed of corporations and investors - particularly from powerful, rich nations - who conceive of forests and earth, rivers and water, and the people of Honduras, as exploitable, discardable objects, and who steal, kill and destroy to produce 'for export' products and profits
- The IMF, World Bank, IDB, etc., institutions created and dominated by these same rich, powerful nations

Berta was killed by ...

- The banana monopolies (United Fruit Company, Standard Fruit, Dole Bananas, Chiquita Bananas, etc.) of the last 200 years
- The producers of African palm (including the World Bank-funded Dinant corporation) and sugarcane 'for export' to global consumers of food products and of "green energies" (ethanol and bio-diesel fuels)
- Maquiladora garment factory exploiters of cheap labor producing clothes for 'top brands': Gildan Activewear, Hanesbrand, JCPenney, Saks Fifth Avenue's The Works, etc.
- Hydro-electric dam companies (like the Atala Zablah family's Agua Zarca project being violently forced upon Indigenous Lenca territories that COPINH is defending) profiting from privatized rivers and water sources
- Tourism enclaves (operated by the Canadian Randy "porn king" Jorgensen, and his ilk) illegally and violently evicting Garifuna peoples from communal, ancestral lands
- Mining companies (Goldcorp Inc., recently bought out by Newmont Corp., NUCOR, Aura Minerals) ripping the earth for gold and iron, poisoning the waters of Guapinol and the Siria Valley, poisoning the blood of local residents, and evicting entire communities and illegally digging up the dead from the 200-year-old Azacualpa cemetery

Most recently, Berta was killed by ...

- The U.S. and Canadian backed military coup of 2009, that ousted the democratically elected government of president Mel Zelaya, and brought back to power the same elites that for so long have dominated and abused Honduras, who - once back in power - announced that "Honduras is open for global business", using repression as a tool of societal control, opening Honduras' borders and government institutions to drug-trafficking, hiring *sicarios* to target and kill hundreds of people, ... people like Berta.

By late 2021, Honduras had one of the highest per capita murder rate in the world, amongst the highest rates of poverty and destitution in the Americas, amongst the highest rates of repression, femicide, journalist killings, corruption and impunity in the Americas ... all this achieved by a “democratic allie” propped up and empowered by the U.S., Canada, etc.

Every year since the coup, tens of thousands of Hondurans (in some years, over 100,000) were forced to flee their homes and countries and try desperately to get refugee status in Mexico or the U.S.

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Berta was killed by all these powerful people, institutions and governments because, as anyone who knew her will tell you, as anyone who learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her will tell you, these are the things she lived, organized, marched and struggled against.

### **What Did She Live, Stand and Struggle For?**

For your rights and mine. For the human rights - collective and individual - of all people, in all countries. For Mother Earth herself – the fields and forests, air and water. For all life forms on this most precious and unique planet.

Berta lived, stood and struggled for another world is necessary and possible.

We remain utterly sad and enraged by this crime and loss, for Berta’s children, mother, sisters and brothers, for her family and friends in Honduras, and across the Americas.

Yet, as a part of her family members and loved ones died with Berta, the life example, vision and spirit of Berta lives on in her family members, loved ones and so many more.

### **What To Do?**

Do what Berta would do, as she always did. Live, organize, work and struggle together. Link arms. Reach out and support the so many victims of this global human order. Live, organize, work and struggle against all injustices and inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities, and for another world is necessary and possible.

Thank-you Berta  
You are loved, missed, forever respected  
Grahame Russell  
[grahame@rightsaction.org](mailto:grahame@rightsaction.org)

(I met Berta in 1998, as part of our work with Rights Action.  
Berta was a dear friend and companera.  
Her mother and some siblings remain dear friends.)

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### **COPINH**

To support efforts for justice in this case, and for all that Berta was working for in Honduras and on this one planet, contact COPINH:

[www.copinh.org](http://www.copinh.org) / <https://bertavivecopinhsigue.copinh.org> / [copinhonduras.blogspot.com](http://copinhonduras.blogspot.com)  
/ <http://copinhenglish.blogspot.com> / @COPINHHONDURAS

### **COPINH statement, 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

<https://copinh.org/2023/03/seven-years-of-seeking-justice-and-memory-for-bertha-caceres-it-is-time-to-act/>

### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

To support land and environmental defenders, and human rights and justice struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: Box 82552 RPO Corktown, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations: <https://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Direct deposits, write to: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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