

Below, a reflection on the life and vision of Berta Cáceres, assassinated March 2, 2016, in Honduras by the (then) U.S. and Canadian-backed 'open-for-global-business', narco-trafficking regime.

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/berta-the-memory-that-flows-like-a-river>

This is a living river threatened by the construction of dams. From the worldview of the Lenca people, water is a fundamental element, just as the earth is part of the balance and creation, just as the spirits live in the water. That is why water must be cared for and respected as a being equal to us'.

Berta: The memory that flows like a river

By Gabriela Castellanos

<https://www.elheraldo.hn/opinion/columnas/berta-la-memoria-que-corre-como-rio-LC12457783>

Seven years after that bad night when the indigenous leader Berta Cáceres was killed, the Honduran State is still in debt to the Lenca people, and to other victims of crimes against social justice fighters and environmentalists sacrificed in the jungle of barbarism, where every day the justice system fertilizes the land with the silence of impunity.



Seven years have passed since Berta, a Lenca activist, was murdered in her home in La Esperanza, Intibucá, for leading the collective struggle in defense of her lands, rivers and forests against the threat of mega-dams on the Gualcarque River, located between the departments of Santa Bárbara and Intibucá, sacred to the Lenca people.

The National Party governments approved 24 hydroelectric projects in the country, including Agua Zarca on the Gualcarque River, whose concession was granted to the company Desarrollos Energéticos S. A. (DESA). Berta led the struggle and managed to get the Chinese multinational Sinohydro, which was going to carry out the work, to withdraw from the project.

With that came the crime, and these words remained:

'This mountain range has a strong relationship with the Lenca people. There are living forests, living mountains. This is a living river threatened by the construction of six dams. From the worldview of the Lenca people, water is a fundamental element, just as the earth is part of the balance and creation, just as the spirits live in the water. That is why water must be cared for and respected as a being equal to us'.

These words of Berta shake the consciences of the criminals of the environment and of all living species, murderers to whom a sentence is not enough, when the criminals go beyond the sentence of a judge, who hide behind the profits of death that annihilates every inch of the forests and the biodiversity of the water sources.

Berta, like other brave women, organized, created bases, claimed the millennial rights of her people, built solidarity fighting collectively for autonomy among peoples and the environment.

Berta created a conscience to oppose the destruction of territories and communities. This act of humanity for life cost her systematic persecution, abuse, threats and then death.

But it was her destiny to be born here, in this Honduras, where environmental, social, economic and gender justice has never existed, a country sown with hatred in the constant violation of rights and the persistent lack of justice for indigenous peoples and social movements.

On this seventh anniversary of that spilled blood, the seeds of many Bertas sprout, deepening the commitment to defend water, rivers, nature and their rights. We remember her words, so full of life, spoken when she received April 2015 the "Green Nobel", the Goldman Prize, considered the highest recognition in the world for activists who defend the environment:

'Of the rivers we are ancestral custodians the Lenca people, guarded also by the spirits of the girls who teach us that to give life in multiple ways for the defense of the rivers is to give life for the good of humanity and of this planet. '

A speech that was an affront to the system of persecution and criminalization by the State and large transnationals, a system that did not care about ending Berta's life, nor that of many more environmental defenders who have been killed in Honduras.

Seven years later, the struggles continue, as do the same threats, but always with hopes for a better world, where the memory of our everyday Berta grows.

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:

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COPINH statement, 7th anniversary

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

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