

## Take action: Two years after the assassination of Berta Cáceres in Honduras

Two years ago today, shortly before midnight, visionary Indigenous and social movement leader **Berta Cáceres** was assassinated in her home. Despite the widespread outrage condemning her murder — Berta was internationally known for her leadership and determination and had won the prestigious [2015 Goldman Environmental Prize](#) just a year before — two years later, **those who ordered and paid for Berta's murder continue to operate freely, enjoying complete impunity.** An [extensive report by an international group of independent experts](#) (GAIPE) found that the Honduran Public Prosecutor's Office has had evidence **identifying some of the intellectual authors of Berta's murder** since May 2016, yet they have not been arrested.

**The powerful criminal structures that persecuted Berta have faced almost no consequences for her murder, enabling them to continue to persecute and kill, and the repression throughout Honduras has only worsened dramatically.** Just last week, Luis Fernando Ayala, a 16-year old environmental and social activist, was found assassinated. Luis Fernando's hands were cut off and his body showing signs of torture. Before his murder, he had been actively involved in the protests against the election fraud. Just a teenager, his life was brutally ended.

**[If your Congressional Representative has not yet sponsored the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act, click here to ask him/her to do so.](#)**

**[If your Congressional Representative has already co-sponsored the Berta Cáceres Act, please call his/her local district office and ask for your Representative to sign onto the new Dear Colleague letter from Rep. Hank Johnson's office about Berta's case.](#)**

**You can find the name of your Representative here ([house.gov](http://house.gov)) [and see if he/she has co-sponsored HR 1299 here](#)**

Also last week Samuel Martínez, the 33-year old leader of campesino group in western Honduras that has been defending their right to land, was found dead in suspicious circumstances. Samuel had been jailed in irregular circumstances for his work defending the right to land, only to turn up dead a few months after winning his freedom. **This week, Honduran human rights lawyer Joaquín Mejía and his family received death threats as he finished a tour in the US** speaking out about the massive human rights violations in Honduras, and Wilfredo Méndez, a prominent human rights leader was intercepted and threatened by armed men.

All of this comes on the heels of months of extreme state repression against protests of the stolen presidential elections, in which **at least 35 demonstrators and bystanders were assassinated**, the majority by state security forces, which routinely fired live bullets at protests. In addition to the demonstrators and bystanders ruthlessly murdered by the state, **at least 393 people were injured and 76 people tortured**, according to data from Honduran human rights organizations. The US-financed Public Prosecutor's Office has yet to prosecute any of the murders by state forces, but has instead arrested and pressed charges against dozens of pro-democracy demonstrators. **[24 political prisoners are in jail](#), many with cases that entail numerous irregularities.**

Before her death, **Berta asked members of the US Congress to cut military aid to Honduras** and not to approve millions of dollars in so-called Alliance for Prosperity funding. Her call was not heeded. After her murder, **several Congressional representatives introduced the [Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act](#)** which would suspend US military and security aid to Honduras. Today, in the face of this massive and systematic state violence against the Honduran people who are simply speaking out for their rights, and a complete misuse of the Public Prosecutor's Office to prosecute those who defend their basic rights while enabling the powerful criminals in the government to remain free, **the absolute minimum the US Congress should do is to immediately pass the Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act.**