



The Benenson Society

The assassination of Berta Cáceres on March 3

Berta Cáceres was an environmental activist and indigenous leader in the central American country of Honduras. She was killed on March 3, 2016 by armed men who broke into her home. She had received many threats because of her outspoken criticism of some hydropower projects in the country, and their impact on the indigenous people of the area.

Honduras is one of the world's most dangerous countries for environmental activists. At least 109 environmental activists were murdered between 2010 and 2015. Since the 2009 coup, Honduras has become one of the world's most dangerous places to be a human rights defender of any kind. Indigenous and Garifuna leaders, LGBTI activists, union leaders, women's rights activists, human rights activists, justice operators, and journalists reporting on human rights and corruption issues are among those who, like environmental activists, are at risk. The murder of Berta Cáceres sends a devastating message to all Hondurans trying to exercise their rights

It matters not whether we support particular issues or causes; the targeting of activists and advocates, lawyers and journalists, government of extreme left or right, or simply forces of violence of whatever ideology or interest, target such individuals as a way of repressing dissent and silencing voices. This was a key concern of Peter Benenson, and the defence of such individuals remains a key objective of our Society.



What can we do?

On March 10 over 200 religious and other organisations wrote to the American Secretary of State, Senator John Kerry, urging US action in this case. We can support this appeal by writing to Sen Kerry (or going on his website to express your concerns)

*U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520
USA*

Dear Secretary of State Kerry

As a member of the Benenson Society I note with alarm the murder of Berta Cáceres in Honduras. We urge the US Government:

- *To support an independent international investigation led by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights into Ms. Cáceres' murder and to urge that the Honduran government invite and fully cooperate with such an investigation.*
- *to insist that Honduran judicial authorities carry out their duties to effectively and promptly investigate Cáceres' murder, in cooperation with the international investigation, and following lines of inquiry that take into account the context of Cáceres' work and situation of risk.*
- *To press the Honduran government to provide security for activists and critics in the country, given the atrocious record of killings.*
- *To use US influence to press the Honduran Government to implement these measures.*

Yours sincerely,