



**July 6th, 2002**

## **HONDURAS || We stand in solidarity with the case of Berta Cáceres and make a strong call for corporate accountability to end impunity.**

Despite the recent sentencing of a company executive for his responsibility in the murder of Lenca defender, Berta Cáceres, [documents](#) show alleged omissions and involvement of financial and corporate entities in her murder. Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) urges the Honduran and Dutch States to ensure justice in the murder of Berta Cáceres. No one should remain in impunity.

Berta Cáceres was assassinated on March 3, 2016, in the midst of a conflict over the construction of the Agua Zarca dam in Lenca territory in Honduras. The Indigenous Peoples of the west of this country have historically struggled for the defense of their ancestral territory, threatened by foreign hydro and mining projects. These operations have been imposed on indigenous peoples without their consent, contravening international human rights law, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Before Berta Cáceres was killed, she and several NGOs had warned the financial entities involved in the project - such as the Dutch bank FMO - that the Lenca People had not given their consent and the violence on the part of the company.

On June 20, 2022, a Honduran court sentenced a senior executive of DESA, the corporation behind the project, to 22 and a half years in prison for the murder of Berta Cáceres. This is an unprecedented acknowledgment of the responsibility of a high-level corporate official in this grave violation of human rights. Nonetheless, there is doubt that all the responsible parties have been prosecuted.

On June 28, 2022, the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) together with the daughters and sons of Berta Cáceres [filed a complaint](#) before the Dutch Attorney General's Office against the Dutch bank FMO and its directors. This legal action points out their alleged complicity in corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, and violence in financing the Agua Zarca Project of the Atala Zablah family. In addition to the civil lawsuit filed by COPINH in May 2018 against FMO, for negligence in the management of its financing of the



aforementioned megaproject, which resulted in violence against the Lenca community of Rio Blanco and COPINH, causing the murder of community members and Berta Cáceres.

The legal actions taken by COPINH and the Cáceres family are an example of the urgency of implementing effective mechanisms for corporate and financial accountability. Extraterritorial activities must have monitoring mechanisms to ensure these respect human rights.