



# 5 YEARS DEMANDING AND BUILDING JUSTICE

Newsletter No. 14 - Year 2021  
March 12



On March 2, the 5th anniversary of the crime against Berta Cáceres was commemorated at the "Utopía" Meeting and Friendship Center. After a very hard year for Honduras and the world due to the crisis aggravated by COVID-19, defender communities from different territories of the country, national and international organizations, representatives of the diplomatic corps in Honduras and the United Nations, were present in a day of reaffirmation of the struggle for justice for Berta.

COPINH and the family of Berta Cáceres, together with the legal team that represents the cause in search of justice, demanded through a [public statement](#) at a [press conference](#) that "There should be no more contemplation for those who, behind the shield of money, continue to murder the people of Honduras" The emphasis on the members of the Atala Zablah family involved in this crime to be prosecuted, tried and punished without further delay or cover-up, strongly marked the day.

"This cause has its roots in the extractivist economic policy, and there are businessmen involved in this crime. Berta has an indisputable profile as an indigenous woman, social leader, human rights defender, she was murdered because she had the capacity to disrupt the

criminal course followed by the structure that murdered her, which is the structure that is plundering Honduras," said Victor Fernandez, member of the Legal Team of the Berta Cáceres case.

Between words of the representative in Honduras of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), music by Honduran singer-songwriters, testimonies of members of the Rio Blanco community and an update of the judicial processes that today are part of a common cause in search of justice and a Virtual Concert with the participation of prominent artists with worldwide recognition as Roger Waters, reaffirmed the commitment to fight to keep alive the memory of Berta and the urgency of his legacy in both thought and action for Honduras today.

## SOWING SOLIDARITY, HARVESTING JUSTICE

In the midst of the bet for impunity in this cause, little by little the Lenca people, COPINH, Berta's family and national and international solidarity, have snatched a yearning for justice that 5 years after the crime is renewed in the spirit of struggle and demand to the State of Honduras for the capture of the masterminds.

A Global Action in solidarity, which added more than 5 thousand demonstrations demanding justice for Berta around the world, marked the ties built until today. The position of authorities such as the member of the European Parliament Tilly Metz, who called on the State of Honduras to [prosecute and judge Daniel Atala Midence](#), financial manager of DESA, the UN Special Rapporteur on [Extrajudicial Executions Agnes Callamard](#) also said "As long as the masterminds are not held accountable, justice for Berta Cáceres has not been delivered".

In addition, civil society organizations sent a [letter to the U.S. Department of State](#) and the U.S. Embassy in Honduras, demanding that pressure continue to be applied so that all those responsible for the crime against Berta Cáceres are brought to justice.



It has been 5 years of building bonds of solidarity, which is why on March 4th, Berta's 50th birthday, organizations, communities and people from different territories around the world planted a ["Tree for Berta"](#). The planting of a tree for life, where the powerful wanted to sow death, was a symbolic act that renewed the commitment to the memory and legacy of Berta Cáceres, reaffirming that this struggle for Berta is an opportunity for Honduras to demonstrate that no one can be above justice.

## A STEP TOWARDS INTELLECTUAL AUTHORSHIP

After 11 suspensions of the oral and public trial stage caused by the defense of Mr. David Castillo, accused for his responsibility as co-perpetrator of the crime of Berta Cáceres and employee of the Atala Zablah family, finally, the hearing for the presentation of evidence against him was held and a date was set for the Oral and Public Debate stage between April 6 and 30 of this year.

This March 1, the Court resolved the evidence that would be admitted to be used in the trial against Castillo. The experts presented by the private prosecution were admitted for jurisdictional control, their expert reports must be presented on March 26 and will be analyzed to be part of the trial in April of this year.

Among the expert evidence presented by the private prosecution against David Castillo, an anthropological and gender perspective expert report by Gladys Tzul Tzul, would show that the crime of Berta Cáceres was a political femicide.

Among other evidence admitted, there are conversations between Mr. Castillo and members of DESA's board of directors and the perpetrators of the crime, in which they planned attacks against Berta Cáceres and COPINH. This criminal link demonstrates the use and abuse of political and economic power, influence peddling, payment of informants, use of police officers in favor of the company, and Castillo's approach to Berta Cáceres for the monitoring and analysis of her movements as a military intelligence officer in the service of the Atala family.

The Court admitted Daniel Atala Midence, Financial Manager of DESA, as a qualified witness for the Oral and Public Debate. Two requests have been filed against Daniel Atala Midence and to date there has been no action by the Public Prosecutor's Office regarding this case.

While Daniel Atala must testify about the actions carried out by Castillo against Berta Cáceres, the Court rejected Jacobo Atala, José Eduardo Atala and Pedro Atala, who also appear among the evidence presented and are part of the intellectual authorship of the crime. They, as members of the board of directors of DESA, "had knowledge of the operations and actions of attacks experienced by COPINH and Berta Cáceres in her struggle in defense of the sacred Gualcarque River," [said Bertha Zúniga](#), General Coordinator of COPINH.