



Brussels, 15 June 2018

Members of the European Parliament statement to the Government of Honduras

The undersigning Members of the European Parliament would like to express our concerns regarding the state of human rights in Honduras.

As Members of the European Parliament, we would like to express our concerns following the latest report published on the 12th of March by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights regarding human rights violations during the post-electoral period in Honduras. To this regard, we would like to embrace the statement issued by the EU Delegation in Honduras, and encourage the Honduran government to swiftly undertake an effective, independent and transparent investigation into the allegations of human rights breaches by security forces during the post-electoral period. We believe there is an urgent need for accountability and the provision of effective remedy to victims.

Since the murder of indigenous leader and environmental defender Ms. Berta Cáceres, the European Parliament has repeatedly expressed the need for a full and thorough investigation into this crime -including the attempted murder of Mr. Gustavo Castro Soto. The consolidation of a just and democratic State based on the principles of rule of law, requires the clarification and sanctioning of all parts directly or indirectly involved in the crime. We remain seriously concerned about the fact that 97% of attacks against human rights defenders remain unresolved.

To this extent, we would like to uptake the recommendations issued by the Independent Group of Experts (GAIPE), and call on the State of Honduras to review -according to legal provisions and international human rights standards- and if needed, to revoke, any concession, contract, licence or any other benefit granted to the Agua Zarca project for violating their duty to undergo a free and informed prior consultation.

Within this context, we remain concerned over the campaigns to delegitimise and criminalise Berta's family and the Council of Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH), as well as the attacks against these and other human rights, indigenous and environmental defenders. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Michael Forst, recently stated during his visit to Honduras, these groups are at serious risk for denouncing the corruption and collusion schemes of those who seek political and corporate benefits through unlawful action.

We therefore embrace Mr. Forst's call to strengthen human rights defenders' mechanisms, as well as the protection of journalists and lawyers, and the need for these mechanisms to be integrated in a broader and comprehensive protection of human rights defenders approach throughout the whole country.

Urgent action is needed in a country that in the 2016-17 period alone, has witnessed over 1200 attacks on human rights defenders, their families and NGOs. We strongly encourage such action to feature measures such as specific protocols to investigate crimes against human rights defenders, awareness raising campaigns on the positive public scrutiny roles played by human rights and environmental defenders, and clear commitments and coordination between all State institutions in pursuing these goals.

Sincerely,



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