

San José, 27 of April, 2016

Mr. President
Juan Orlando Hernandez
President of the Republic of Honduras

Dear President Hernández,

Deeply saddened by the tragic killing of indigenous and environmental leader Berta Cáceres early last month, allow me, Mr. President, to approach you in order to commend you for your strong words and actions in favor of a thorough investigation to identify and prosecute the material and intellectual authors of this vile act.

I'm sure we agree that in a case such as this one, involving the brutal murder of a nationally and internationally recognized social leader, it is important that the investigation be seen as transparent and impartial by the victim's family and by the general public. This is why I respectfully urge you to consider granting the family's request to allow the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to form a commission of independent international experts to join the murder investigation.

Your request that the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the MACCIH support the investigation into Cáceres' killing shows that your government is open to international scrutiny. However, it is important to take under consideration that in the Inter-American system, only the IACHR has the mandate and capacity to create a commission of independent investigators.

In 2009, I had the honor of mediating an agreement that helped mitigate the political crisis that shook Honduras. At the time, my objective was to try to secure peace and democracy. I trust, Mr. President, that you understand that my request to you today also comes from concern for social peace that increases confidence in justice and strengthens the rule of law in your country. The world is watching Honduras closely and I am confident that you will make the right decision to allow for an objective investigation, such as the one requested by the family of Berta Cáceres and numerous human rights organizations around the world.

Sincerely,

Oscar Arias Sánchez