

Court Files on Murdered Honduran Activist Berta Caceres Stolen



Tegucigalpa, October 3 (RHC)-- In Honduras, the case files on the murder of Berta Caceres have been stolen, according to reports from the Central American country, further impeding a popularly-discredited investigation of the renowned Indigenous environmental activist.

Juan Jimenez Mayor, spokesperson of the Organization of American States Mission, said: "The theft of the case files on Berta Caceres is a criminal offense that requires enthusiastic action from the public prosecutor and the judiciary to find and sanction those responsible."

Jimenez Mayor, who also serves as the special representative of the OAS Support Mission Against Corruption and Impunity, called for a complete investigation.

The OAS said that the judge -- who supposedly carried the files in her car -- was acting irresponsibly. The regional body will evaluate the damage done to the case and will designate an officer to oversee the reconstitution of the files, which contained evidence incriminating those directly and indirectly responsible for the death of Berta Caceres.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez and OAS Secretary-General Luis Almagro launched the OAS mission in January after widespread high-level government corruption implicating the ruling National Party came to the fore last year, sparking months of protests.

Caceres' family and movement members have demanded an independent probe since day one, expressing skepticism in the local justice system to carry out a reliable investigation given its track record of corruption, impunity and botched cases. They have claimed that the Honduran company Desarrollos Energéticos, or DESA, and the Honduran government are ultimately responsible for the Indigenous leader's murder.

But Honduran authorities have not answered their calls and have instead largely excluded family and colleagues from the process. In the months leading up to her murder, Caceres denounced dozens of death threats, incidents of harassment, and threats of sexual violence, allegedly at the hands of state and private agents.

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