

To:
Ms. Lilianne Ploumen,
Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Bezuidenhoutseweg 67
The Hague, The Netherlands

Mr. Jürgen Rigterink,
Chief Executive Officer, FMO
Anna van Saksenlaan 71
2593 HW The Hague, The Netherlands

Cc:
Ms. Linda Broekhuizen, Chief Investment Officer, FMO
Ms. Elvira Eurlings, Director Energy, FMO
Ms. Emilie Goodall, Manager Development Impact and Sustainability, FMO
Mr. Casper Havinga, Investment Officer Special Operations, FMO

Ms. Reina Buijs, Deputy Director DGIS
Mr. Hans Docter, Director DGIS/DDE
Mr. Peter Derrek Hof, Dutch Ambassador to Costa Rica
Mr. Kees van Baar, Human Rights Ambassador to the Netherlands

<p><i>Date:</i> Amsterdam, 2 March 2017 <i>Re:</i> Commemoration murder Berta Cáceres; FMO needs to exit the Agua Zarca project and put affected communities at the center of their decision making <i>Contact:</i> Both ENDS: Anna van Ojik, a.vanojik@bothends.org, ☎ + 31 20 5306600 SOMO: Kristen Genovese, k.genovese@somo.nl, ☎ +31 20 6391291</p>
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Dear Ms. Ploumen and Mr. Rigterink,

One year ago today, internationally recognized human rights activist Berta Cáceres was brutally murdered in her home in La Esperanza, Honduras. Before her murder, Berta and her organization, COPINH, led the opposition to the FMO-financed Agua Zarca hydropower project for its failure to obtain the consent of the Lenca people. While we understand that FMO is currently negotiating the terms of its exit from the project, one year has now passed and FMO is still invested in the project. We urge FMO to do everything in its power to come to a swift conclusion to its negotiations and effectively exit the project.

Furthermore, we call on the Dutch government and FMO to ensure that the mistakes made in the Agua Zarca case are not repeated in current or future projects financed by FMO. Based on our experiences engaging with FMO over the past 10 years in both policy discussions as well as in various cases, we see that FMO still places too much trust in its clients and ultimately prioritizes their interests over those of affected communities. Rather, FMO should put affected communities at the center of their decision-making processes. That means engaging with them to seek their input on client and project selection, verifying with them client-provided information throughout the project cycle, and ensuring that their rights are respected. This is especially true as FMO increasingly invests in countries with poor governance, weak rule of law and high levels of violence.

Today, as we remember Berta Cáceres and the legacy of her work, we must be reminded that other human rights defenders continue to be murdered in Honduras, as well as in other countries in which FMO is investing. We believe there is only one way to prevent violence and conflict related to development projects; by directly engaging with local communities prior to project approval and by taking their rights as a starting point for all FMO's activities. We will continue our engagement with the Dutch government and FMO to achieve this.

Yours Sincerely,
also on behalf of Kristen Genovese, SOMO,

Danielle Hirsch,
Director Both ENDS

Endorsed by:

Action Aid Netherlands, Netherlands
AWID, International
Bank Track, Netherlands
Count Me In!, International
CREA, India
Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres (FCAM), Nicaragua
Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA, an alliance among Mama Cash, Both ENDS and FCAM), International
JASS (Just Associates), International
MamaCash, Netherlands
Urgent Action Fund Global, International
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