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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0482/2016**

12.4.2016

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Honduras: situation of human rights defenders  
(2016/2648(RSP))

**Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Enrique Calvet Chambon, Petras Auštrevičius, Pavel Telička, Marielle de Sarnez, Marietje Schaake, Valentinas Mazuronis, Ivo Vajgl, Filiz Hyusmenova, Martina Dlabajová, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Nedzhmi Ali, Dita Charanzová, José Inácio Faria, Fredrick Federley, Nathalie Griesbeck, Antanas Guoga, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Louis Michel, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Robert Rochefort, Hannu Takkula, Carolina Punset, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Hilde Vautmans, Paavo Väyrynen, Kaja Kallas, Javier Nart, Gérard Deprez**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Honduras: situation of human rights defenders (2016/2648(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolution of 11 December 2012 on the EU-Central America association agreement
  - having regard to the Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020 for Honduras
  - having regard to the statement of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Federica Mogherini, of 12 March 2016 on the murder of Berta Cáceres,
  - having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Honduras of 15 September 2009,
  - having regard the association agreement between the European Union and the Central American countries signed on 29 June 2012,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
  - having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144 adopting the Declaration on human rights defenders,
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas according to several reports human rights defenders, environmental activists, indigenous rights defenders, journalists, legal practitioners, women's rights activists and LGBTI peoples among other activists continue to be subject to abuses, violence, arbitrary detentions, threats, and killings in Honduras; whereas the current administration has initiated legislation that would protect human rights defenders, journalists and legal practitioners, however, as of yet, it has not been put into force; whereas concerns remain about the near total impunity of security forces;
- B. whereas according to numerous reports received by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, Honduras has become one of the most dangerous countries in the world for human rights defenders, particularly those promoting rights related to environment and land issues;
- C. whereas, according to the information available, Berta Cáceres, a prominent indigenous rights leader that received multiple death threats, was murdered by unidentified men inside her home in La Esperanza on 3 March 2016; whereas Gustavo Castro Soto, a Mexican human rights defender, was present and injured in the attack and is the sole witness to the murder of Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres; whereas the Inter American Commission on Human Rights issued protection measures for her, which were reportedly

not implemented by the Honduran State; whereas on 15 March Nelson Garcia member of her organisation was killed after he had witnessed a forced eviction carried out by security forces in the Río Lindo area;

- D. whereas Berta Cáceres, a general coordinator and co-founder of the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH), together with other activists, led a peaceful decade-long fight against a mega-project to build the Agua Zarca Dam along the Gualcarque river;
- E. whereas Honduran authorities have been ineffective, investigating or providing protection for indigenous people and activists resisting the expropriation of their land for use in hydro-electric or mining mega-projects; whereas Honduras is a signatory to the International Labor Organization Convention 169 that requires “free, prior, and informed consent” from local communities affected by such projects or must at least initiate appropriate procedures that "provide the opportunity for effective representation of the peoples concerned.";
- F. whereas the murder of Paola Barraza earlier this year, a defender of LGBTI rights and a trans woman, puts into focus the increasing danger faced by the LGBTI community in Honduras; whereas the absence of accountability for such crimes, despite the creation of a specific task force to deal with the issue, may point to a lack of interest on the part of the authorities to deter future attacks;
- G. whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, has stressed the need for Honduran authorities to take immediate concrete steps to ensure safety for all human rights defenders in the country, and their families in order to avoid the risk of turning the country into a lawless killing zone for human rights defenders; whereas his remarks has been endorsed among others by the Special Rapporteurs on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai;
- H. whereas the constitutional reform of 2011 lacked sufficient safeguards regarding judicial appointment so as to ensure judicial independence in Honduras; whereas the Council of the Judiciary routinely replace dissenting judges; whereas the level of citizen confidence in the functioning of security and justice institutions is around 19%;
- I. whereas in February 2013, the United Nations Working Group on the use of mercenaries stated that the government had failed to properly regulate private security firms and expressed concern regarding their “alleged involvement ... in widespread human rights violations including killings, disappearances, forced evictions, and sexual violence.”
- J. whereas a holistic approach to the way in which corporations abide by human rights standards globally is still lacking, and that this is allowing certain states and companies to circumvent such rules;
- K. whereas several EU Member States have not yet ratified the EU-Central America association agreement, meaning the “Political Dialogue” branch has not been put into force;

1. Expresses its outrage at the recent politically motivated assassination of Berta Cáceres, Nelson Garcia, Paola Barraza and other human rights defenders and activists and expresses its profound solidarity with the relatives of the victims.
2. Pays tribute to Berta Cáceres, a Honduran environmental activist and indigenous leader of the Lenca people, co-founder and coordinator of COPINH, and winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015, who dedicated her life to the pursuit of a more democratic society that respects fundamental societal and individual rights.
3. Calls for an immediate, independent, objective and thorough investigation into the murders in order to bring those responsible to justice and put an end to impunity; takes the view that the instruments available within the framework of the United Nations and the Inter-American commission on human rights would help to ensure an impartial and fair investigation.
4. Remains deeply concerned by the overall human rights situation in Honduras, notably the increase of police abuses and corruption, the use of the military for public security operations, the worrying lack of independence of the Honduran Judiciary, the decline of freedom of expression within the country and the rise in attacks on journalists, the arbitrary detentions, the culture of homophobia that contributes to bias-motivated killings of members of the LGBTI community, the continued attacks on indigenous environmental leaders carried out with impunity in rural communities in particular and the increased physical and legal harassment of human rights activists and defenders solely as a response to their peaceful exercise of their fundamental freedoms or their expression of dissent.
5. Reminds corporate actors of their responsibility to respect human rights throughout their global operations, regardless of where their users are located and independently of whether the host state meets its own human rights obligations; strongly supports the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and calls on companies to implement them, including through the establishment of due diligence policies and risk management safeguards, and the provision of effective remedies when their activities have caused or contributed to an adverse human rights impact;
6. Calls on the Honduran authorities to strictly uphold the unequivocal guarantees in relation to these freedoms to which they are beholden under their National Constitution and under International law.
7. Calls on the Honduran Government to ensure greater balance in the composition of the National Council for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, guaranteeing full civil society representation.
8. Calls on the Honduran Government to immediately put into force and adequately funded the proposed legislation on the protection of human rights defenders, environmental activists, journalist and legal practitioners; stresses the need to provide effective protection measures to those at risk following a proper consultation with beneficiaries.
9. Calls on the Honduran authorities to make sure that all pressure, repressive acts and

intimidation, both political and judicial, against civil society representatives are stopped and dully investigated and prosecuted, allowing them to act freely in line with the basic principles of the Honduran constitution.

10. Calls on the EU Member States that haven't done so to ratified the EU-Central America association agreement; Urges the Council to develop a unified policy towards Honduras that commits the 28 EU Member States and the EU institutions to a strong common message concerning the role of human rights in the EU-Honduras relationship and the need to end the current human rights situation; is of the view that an EU strategy should be aimed at getting Honduras to fully respect its international human rights obligations.
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the Council of Europe, the National Parliaments of the 28 member States, the President, the Government and Parliament of Honduras, Parlacen, Eurolat Parliamentary Assembly and the CELAC.