

# I R T F

## InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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via fax: 011 504 2239 3298  
Sr. Presidente  
**Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández**  
President of Honduras

via fax: via fax: 011 504 2221 5667  
Sr. Fiscal  
**Óscar Fernando Chinchilla**  
Attorney General of Honduras

March 8, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are incredulous and outraged at the refusal by Honduran authorities to allow human rights defender **Gustavo Castro Soto** to return to Mexico where he directs *Otros Mundos A.C./Friends of the Earth*, a Mexican non-governmental organization (NGO). Gustavo Castro Soto was in Honduras facilitating capacity-building workshops. He was the sole witness to the murder on March 2 of his colleague, indigenous leader Berta Cáceras (cf our letter of March 7) and was injured in the attack.

Early in the morning of March 6 Honduran authorities intercepted Gustavo Castro Soto at the airport in Tegucigalpa, as he attempted to board a flight to Mexico. The Attorney General's office issued an order requiring him to stay in the country to continue giving testimony about the murder of Berta Cáceres. *Otros Mundos* said in a press release that he is currently being held at the Mexican embassy in Tegucigalpa. Gustavo Castro fears that the authorities are seeking to return him to Intibucá Department one day after authorities told him he was free to leave. He has already provided testimony and fears for his safety in Honduras.

He has asked the authorities for copies of his declarations, but they have denied this petition and have not provided him with information about the investigation. *Otros Mundos* said they fear that his rights to due process are being violated and that his safety is in danger if he is returned to Intibucá.

We **strongly urge** that you

- abstain from returning Gustavo Castro Soto to Intibucá Department and allow him to return to Mexico as soon as possible;
- respect his rights to due process and consular protection.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai      and      Christine Stonebraker-Martinez  
Co-Coordinators

copies:      CONADEH (National Commission for Human Rights) ~ via email  
              Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
              James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037  
              Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
              Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Rapporteur for Honduras and for Rights of LGBTI Persons ~ via email  
              US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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