

April 2017

HONDURAS: Protect defenders of the environment

Celebrate Earth Day on April 22! It's a day of action around the world to protect the environment.

But what if taking action to protect the environment put your life in danger? That is what Tomás Gómez faces.

Last October, gunmen waited for him outside his office. When he came out, they shot at him. Luckily, he survived. But the threats on his life continue and he could be attacked again at any moment. That's why he needs your support.

Tomás leads an organization known as COPINH [*pronounced co peen*]. It represents indigenous communities in the Central American country of Honduras. The communities have become targets of violence since they began a campaign to stop construction of a huge hydroelectric dam on the Gualcarque River.

The river is sacred to Indigenous communities. They believe its waters are a precious source of life that must be protected in order to make sure that

everyone has the plants, food and medicine they need for a good life.

Under international law, Indigenous Peoples have the right to make decisions about any project that will affect their

lands and water. But Tomás and COPINH say they were never even consulted. They also say they have made it clear that they oppose the dam because of the effects it will have on them.

Already, other indigenous leaders have been killed for speaking up against the dam, and for the environment in Honduras. The most famous is Berta Cáceres, COPINH's former leader. Men broke into her house. They shot and killed her in March last year, soon after she won a famous environmental prize.

Honduras is now one of the most dangerous countries to be a defender of the environment. It's time for action to protect people's lives.



Tomás Gómez is the leader of an organization trying to protect a river in Honduras. The last leader was killed for her work. Now the life of Tomás is in danger, too.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Please write a letter to the President of Honduras to express your concern and call for action.

Start with Dear President Juan Orlando Hernández and say where you are writing from. Make sure to mention Canada because the president cares about his reputation in other countries.

Tell the president how you feel about the attack on Tomás Gómez and the killing of COPINH members like Berta Cáceres.

Ask him to protect Tomás Gómez, COPINH members and all defenders of the land, the water and the rights of Indigenous peoples in Honduras.



Berta Cáceres

If you would like to add more, you could also

- ask him to find the people who ordered the attacks and carried them out, and then punish them according to the law.
- remind the president that the world is watching because all of us care about the environment and the people who protect it.

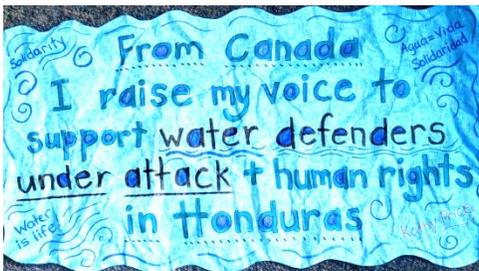
WHERE DO I SEND MY MESSAGE?

President Juan Orlando Hernández
c/o Ambassador of Honduras
151 Slater Street, Suite 805A
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3

Postage: \$.85
Fax: (613) 232-0193
E-mail: ambassador@embassyhonduras.hn



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?



Make your support for water defenders like Tomás visible. Create an eye-catching message on blue cloth or paper. We will share it with Tomás and COPINH so they know they are not alone. Mail your greeting to Tomás, Amnesty International
3-1992 Yonge Street, Toronto M4S 1Z7
For more instructions, see <https://www.amnesty.ca/blog/our-support-urgently-needed-threatened-water-defenders-central-america>

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Watch a four-minute video about the struggle to defend the Gualcarque River in Honduras at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh9Sn9oJR94>.