



Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition *Defending Women Defending Rights*

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition is calling for justice for Bettina Cruz Velázquez who has been unfairly and severely prosecuted as an act of reprisal for her work as a woman human rights defender.

Bettina Cruz Velázquez is currently going through criminal proceedings launched by the Mexican Federal Government in 2012, with an outcome expected in days. She is accused of having committed the crimes of:

- Unlawful deprivation of liberty; and,
- Crimes Against Consumption and National Wealth, under Articles 364 and 254 TER Section I of the Federal Penal Code, as part of a demonstration, at which she was NOT present.

Since the start of her trial, she has been threatened, assaulted and arbitrarily detained by agents of the state.

Bettina Cruz Velázquez is an Indigenous binnizá woman, member of the Asamblea de los Pueblos Indígenas del Istmo de Tehuantepec en Defensa de la Tierra y el Territorio (APIITDTT - Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Tehuantepec Isthmus in Defense of Land and Territory) in Oaxaca Mexico.

Since 2007, she has campaigned to defend their territory against the Mareña Renewables, Gas Natural Fenosa, Demex (Renovalia Energy), Enel and Iberdrola companies that have attempted to grab their ejido and communal lands to install wind power generators.

There has been a lack of transparency in the development of the projects without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples on whose lands the generators were built. Despite requests by the community for authorities to intervene, they have remained absent and placed corporate interests ahead of human rights obligations.

In response to the communities' peaceful protests, the Mexican government has chosen to enact reprisals against human rights defenders. The WHRDIC has grave concerns that this is a strategy to intimidate, persecute and criminalize not only Bettina Cruz's work, but also the legitimate work of all human rights defenders with the goal to put limits on advocacy work and serve as a mechanism of criminalisation of social protest.

The WHRDIC will monitor the trial closely to ensure that Mexico upholds its international human rights obligations.

Notes

The Women Human Rights Defender International Coalition is a resource and advocacy network supporting women defenders worldwide. We have 29 members:

Amnesty International (AI)

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)

Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR)

Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)

Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL)

Front Line Defenders

Human Rights First

Information Monitor (INFORM)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW-AP)

Isis International

ISIS Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (ISIS-WICCE)

Just Associates (JASS)

The Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM)

MADRE

Nazra for Feminist Studies

Peace Brigades International

Rainbow Rights Project (R-Rights), Inc.

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF)

Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (WIGJ)

Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)

World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)