

The Honourable Mark Mendicino, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety  
House of Commons, Ottawa  
Ontario K1A 0A6  
Email: [marco.mendicino@parl.gc.ca](mailto:marco.mendicino@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Mendicino,

I am writing to express serious concern about the safety of Wet'suwet'en land defenders in British Columbia who oppose the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline. According to Wet'suwet'en leaders, drilling under the under the Wedzin Kwa (Morice River) is imminent. This is one of the last remaining clean sources of drinking water and salmon spawning grounds in the territory. Peaceful protestors and land defenders have occupied the drill pad site since September 2021. British Columbia's Minister of Public Safety authorized militarized police forces to arrest and forcibly remove land defenders from the territory in order to enforce an injunction obtained by the company. I am extremely worried that further arrests will put Wet'suwet'en land defenders at risk of serious human rights violations.

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs – the traditional authorities of the Nation according to Wet'suwet'en Law as well as the Supreme Court of Canada's 1997 Delgamuukw ruling – have never consented to the Coastal GasLink pipeline project, even though some elected First Nations governments have signed benefit agreements with the company. Wet'suwet'en land defenders say they are harassed, intimidated, forcibly evicted, and criminalized by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the company's private security guards for peacefully defending their traditional lands over which they have title.

In May, the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued a third letter to Canada noting its concern over the escalating use of force, surveillance, and criminalization of land defenders and peaceful protestors by the RCMP, the RCMP's Community-Industry Response Group (CIRG) and private security firms. I ask you, as a matter of urgency, to:

- Immediately withdraw RCMP and associated security and policing forces from Wet'suwet'en territory and investigate all allegations of harassment, intimidation and forced evictions;
- Immediately cease RCMP all construction on the Coastal GasLink Pipeline and affiliated infrastructure until the free, prior and informed consent is obtained from all Wet'suwet'en people;
- Return to constructive discussions that were stalled in November 2021 with the Hereditary Chiefs about the Coastal GasLink Pipeline, respect for the laws, self-determination and right to free, prior, informed consent of the Wet'suwet'en people.

Yours sincerely,