



Cas Yikh Territory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wet'suwet'en Members Sue Police, Coastal Gaslink and Private Security for Targeted Harassment Campaign

Unceded Wet'suwet'en Yintah (Smithers - BC), June 22, 2022 – Members of the Gidimt'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have filed a notice of civil claim against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, B.C.'s Minister of Justice, Coastal Gaslink Pipeline LTD., and private security contractor Forsythe. The lawsuit follows months of targeted harassment and intimidation, through which hundreds of police and private security personnel have attempted to coerce Wet'suwet'en people into abandoning homes and village sites on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory.

Since February 2022 the RCMP Community Industry Response Group (C-IRG) accompanied by Forsythe, Coastal GasLink's private security contractor, have continually harassed, followed, surveilled and intimidated Gidimt'en clan members at their homes, including the Gidimt'en Checkpoint village site and the Tsel Kiy Kwa (Lamprey Creek) village site. In the span of a few months, individual RCMP officers have entered the Gidimt'en Checkpoint more than 700 times.

In 2018, Gidimt'en people reoccupied land inhabited by their ancestors, building cabins and homes at the Gidimt'en Checkpoint to serve as a base for traditional cultural practices. With a new feast hall under construction, the Gidimt'en Checkpoint and Tsel Kiy Kwa village sites are increasingly important sites of Wet'suwet'en resistance, resilience, and resurgence.

In recent months, the lawsuit alleges, police have threatened and made unlawful arrests, demanded identification from Gidimt'en guests, blocked visitors, entered village sites multiple times per day, assaulted and battered visitors, shone high beams and spotlights into residential buildings, awakened and harassed sleeping residents, seized Gidimt'en equipment and property, opened doors to residential buildings, and followed individuals on remote forest service roads. Meanwhile, Coastal GasLink's private security contractor Forsythe has deployed ex-law enforcement to conduct 24 hour surveillance, continually filming residents including children, on Gidimt'en villages and sharing information with RCMP.

"The police tactics used on Gidimt'en territory have had no lawful purpose or basis. They have been unreasonable and excessive, discriminatory on the basis of race, malicious and an abuse of police powers. They represent an effort to suppress lawful activity and the assertion of Indigenous rights and title," states the Notice of Civil Claim.

Last month, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued its third [rebuke](#) to BC and Canada, calling for a withdrawal of police forces and the cessation of the

GIDIMT'EN CHECKPOINT



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forced eviction of Wet'suwet'en people from their territory. The letter urges Canada to cease construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, until free, and prior informed consent is received from the Wet'suwet'en people and to engage in negotiations with these impacted communities.

The criminalization of Wet'suwet'en people is not the way to reconciliation. The Gidimt'en clan wants to see an end to the illegal harassment and intimidation of Wet'suwet'en people and homesites and for CIRG to be immediately removed from Gidimt'en Territory.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

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