



October 24, 2022 - No. 33

Uphold Wet'suwet'en Sovereignty
Democracy Cannot Co-exist with RCMP
Violence, Terror and Impunity



Cross Canada Day of Action

- **Demand for Status for All Without Delay Rings Out Loud and Clear**

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RCMP intrude on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory

People from across Turtle Island participated in an important webinar on October 19 organized to discuss the current situation on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory. The Wet'suwet'en people and their allies have been fighting a life and death battle to keep the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline off their territory. Currently drilling has started under the headwaters of the Wedzin Kwa which is the source of drinking water for Wet'suwet'en villages and is a key salmon spawning area.

Speakers on the webinar included hereditary Chiefs Na'Moks and Woos, and Sleydo', Wet'suwet'en land defender and spokesperson for the Gidimt'en checkpoint.

Chief Na'Moks condemned the actions of the RCMP on Wet'suwet'en territory which, he emphasized, have the full backing of the federal and BC governments. "In our territory, in just a few months, there have been hundreds and hundreds of visits from the RCMP to our territory and homesteads." He pointed out that the RCMP arrive at all hours of the day and night and use every excuse to justify their threats and intimidation. "They come in and make things up like a dirty license plate on a dusty road and then they'll arrest you and bring you in." He pointed out that there are now notices posted and enforced by the RCMP that the drilling and blasting areas are out of bounds. This includes the traditional smokehouse which is used to smoke fish and game. The Chief noted that no blasting or drilling permits have been issued by the traditional chiefs and therefore all this activity is illegal.

Chief Na'Moks also cited the Trudeau government's invoking of the Emergencies Act earlier this year allegedly needed to deal with the so-called Freedom Convoy occupation of Ottawa, which he said will be used to further criminalize Indigenous peoples who oppose economic development on their territories and to target others standing up for their rights.

He said that after the Supreme Court upheld the rights of the Wet'suwet'en in the historic Delgamuukw case on December 11, 1997, he thought that it would change the way Canada treated Indigenous people but this has not been the case. Governments put the profits of private interests before human rights, he noted, and added that even though BC and Canada claim to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it is business as usual. This can be seen, he said, when [Canada] "comes at unarmed, peaceful people such as ourselves with armed militia and brings in security people in the way they do -- helicopters, dogs, chainsaws -- they smash down your doors and bring in equipment to serve the interests of industry." He added "It shouldn't be industries running a country, it should be the people." He also said that democracy cannot co-exist with RCMP violence, terror and impunity.

Chief Na'Moks called on everyone to stand with the Wet'suwet'en because what is happening to the Wet'suwet'en has consequences for all Canadians, so "Be heard, be seen, speak up."

Sleydo' was the next speaker. She explained: "We had a consensus to say no to CGL and all pipelines on our territories. We held a smoke feast to announce we would deny access to the Service Road. Here we are almost four years later and we have exhausted all means. We have attempted legal actions that have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and hundreds of thousands of hours. The UN Committee on Environmental Racism wrote to condemn police and CGL violence against our people." She added that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between BC and the hereditary chiefs in 2020 was thought to be a new starting point to recognize the rights of the Wet'suwet'en, but what came after was an escalation of RCMP paramilitary raids and violence, arrests and intimidation.

She pointed out that it is illegal under Canadian law to disturb a river where salmon are spawning. A certain species of endangered lamprey eel is facing extinction due to the drilling, but no regulatory bodies are doing their duty to step in and stop this. She said that "currently the salmon are spawning in the river and you can actually hear the drilling happening from kilometres away you can feel it in the ground, in the earth. The drillpad site is massive. There are police officers spending 24 hours a day, seven days a week inside a double sided 12-foot fence topped with razor wire to protect the drilling under the Wedzin Kwa right now."



Water ceremony on Wet'suwet'en territory, August 20, 2022.

She called on workers, unions, political activists, youth and student organizations and everyone to step up the fight to push back against what is happening on Wet'suwet'en land that will have short and long term environmental and social repercussions affecting not only the Wet'suwet'en but other peoples of the region and downriver.

Chief Woos said that the federal and provincial governments must be held to account for their refusal to respect the sovereignty of the Wet'suwet'en who want to be left alone to determine their own affairs, as is their right. His own experience, he said, shows that it is not possible to put faith in governments that serve private industry at the expense of human beings. He recalled that two weeks after the BC government signed an MOU with the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs which was supposed to signal new respectful relations, the RCMP conducted a mass raid in which Sleydo' and other land defenders were arrested and brutalized. He added, "We tried to get to the drill pad in the summer and the police were there. I attempted to talk to the police superintendent in Prince George but it's like talking to a wall."

Chief Woos called on all Canadians to mobilize themselves to stand with the Wet'suwet'en people as they continue to oppose the unlawful activities of CGL to push its pipeline through their territory. He said that despite various environmental laws, governments and industry are not listening, blinded by greed. He said the responsibility falls on everyone to take all measures to help the Wet'suwet'en who are being isolated and further criminalized.

The organizers called on everyone to speak to their neighbours and friends about the just struggle of the Wet'suwet'en against the racist Canadian state and RCMP and to take other actions such as calling their MPs to demand that they take a stand against RCMP violence and intimidation and for an end to the drilling. Pickets and other actions outside the 1,200 branches of the Royal Bank of Canada, the main funder of the pipeline, were discussed and everyone was asked to contact the executives and directors of the bank to urge them to divest from the CGL pipeline project.

The heroic battle of the Wet'suwet'en to assert their sovereignty and hereditary rights has revealed the hypocrisy and perfidy of the Trudeau Liberals and the BC NDP government who speak about respecting Indigenous peoples but do the opposite. It is clear that the cartel parties in the parliament and legislatures are beholden to private interests.

The governments of Canada and BC must be held to account for refusing to recognize Indigenous hereditary rights and for criminalizing Wet'suwet'en resistance. TMLD calls on everyone to step up their support for the courageous Wet'suwet'en land defenders.



Drill pad constructed by Coastal GasLink to drill under Wedzin Kwa headwaters, September 18, 2022

(Photos: Gidimt'en Checkpoint, M. Bush, A. Follett Hosgood)

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Demand for Status for All Without Delay Rings Out Loud and Clear



Car caravan visits Montreal-area ministers' offices, October 16, 2022.

On October 16, 32 actions took place at the constituency offices of federal Liberal cabinet ministers across Canada on a matter of great urgency -- the demand that the estimated 1.7 million temporary workers, migrant workers, refugees, international student migrants and undocumented persons be granted permanent status as a matter of right.

The actions were organized by the Migrant Rights Network to bring pressure to bear on cabinet

ministers because since Prime Minister Trudeau announced 10 months ago that the Liberals will bring in a regularization program, little by way of concrete action has been taken.

At the pickets, refugees, migrant workers, those without status and international students spoke out about their conditions of life. They shared their stories of being isolated, being denied basic social supports such as health care, and of being exploited and abused at work. They spoke of the daily insecurity and fear they and their families face.



They also expressed their resolve to continue organizing and fighting till everyone has permanent status and there is an end to their exploitation and abuse. It was noted that close to 500 civil society organizations in Canada and hundreds of thousands of Canadians have signed petitions and taken action in support of those without status. The participants collectively called on the Trudeau government to make good on their promises to regularize their status thus enabling everyone to have a secure and dignified life.

St. John's, NL



Halifax, NS

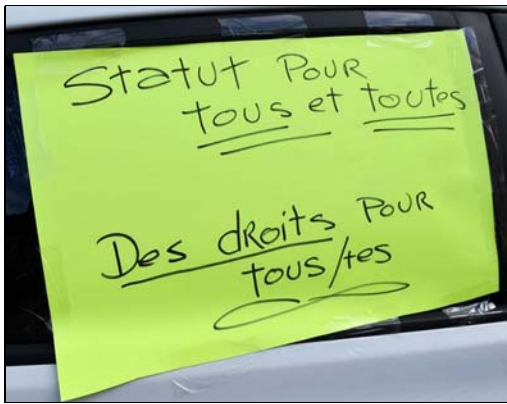


Moncton, NB



Montreal



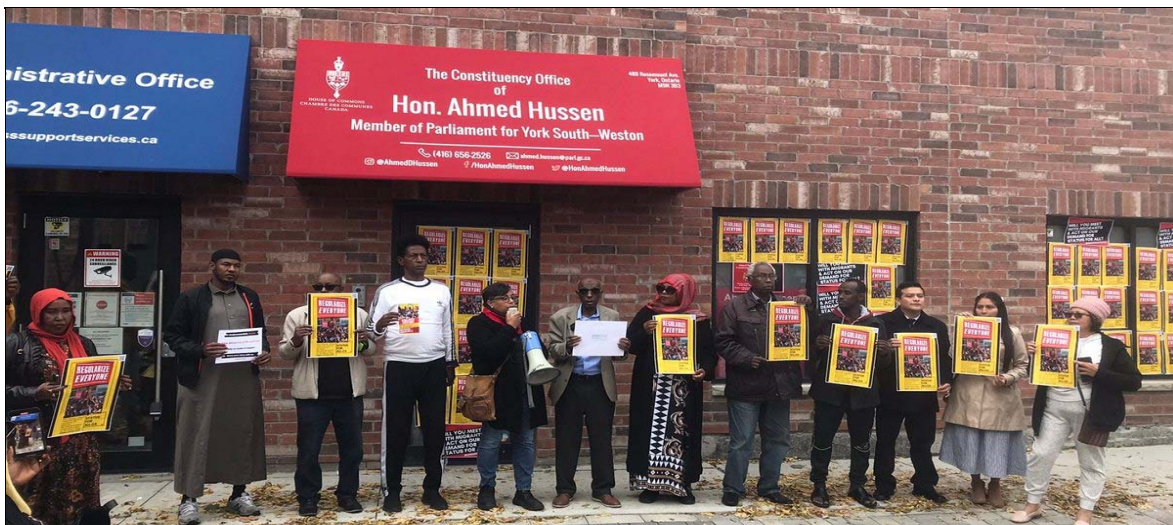


Ottawa



Toronto







Brampton



Mississauga



Oakville



Hamilton



Thunder Bay



Edmonton



Vancouver



(Photos: TML, Migrant Rights Network, Migrant Workers' Alliance for Change, Hamilton SMART team, No One Is Illegal Halifax, W. Karli)

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