

VIDEA Statement of Support and Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en

VIDEA is an International Development agency, we take a Human Rights and Social Justice based approach to our work. We have the privilege of working widely with Indigenous youth and communities.

The United Nations Committee on Racism has urged Canada to immediately stop the construction of three major resource projects in B.C. until it obtains approval from affected First Nations. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by its State parties, this Convention is signed by Canada. The committee has called for a suspension of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, Site C dam and Coastal GasLink pipeline. It has also stated that it is disturbed by law enforcement's "forced removal, disproportionate use of force, harassment and intimidation" and "escalating threat of violence" against Indigenous people.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs has issued a statement saying that "We are in absolute outrage and a state of painful anguish as we witness the Wet'suwet'en people having their title and rights brutally trampled on and their right to self-determination denied." In a February 6 news release, Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs announced they had filed an application for a judicial review of the environmental assessment certificate (EAC) issued to Coastal GasLink, the builder of a contentious 670-kilometre natural-gas pipeline from northeast B.C. to Kitimat. Chief Don Tom, Vice-President of the UBCIC has stated that "Using armed force to take Indigenous peoples off their unceded and traditional territories against their will is not reconciliation, it is colonialism in all of its ugliness and hypocrisy".

We stand behind the United Nations Committee on Racism's statement that upholds Indigenous title and urges respect to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). We are calling for the safety and protection of hereditary leaders, land and water protectors and the youth leaders who are leading demonstrations of solidarity with Wet'suwet'en people.

We encourage action and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous People, and the Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action. We also call for the full implementation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Enquiry Calls to Justice (Reclaiming Power and Place), including Calls 13.1 – 13.5 that are directed towards Extractive Industries.

We stand with the Wet'suwet'en People in their peaceful defense of their lands. We stand with Indigenous youth who are striving to have their voices heard by governments. We stand with peaceful land and water defenders around the world who are working to secure a sustainable present and future for all of us.

VIDEA is located on the unceded traditional territories of the WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), Xwsepsum (Esquimalt), T'Sou-ke (Sooke), Scia'new (Beecher Bay) and Quw'utsun (Cowichan) Nations. We are grateful to work, learn and grow within these lands.