

Premier of British Columbia
c/o Amnesty International, att. Sleydo'
Postboks 702 sentrum
0106 Oslo

Dear Premier,

I am deeply concerned about the harassment and criminalization of indigenous Wet'suwet'en land defenders who oppose the construction of a natural gas pipeline by the company Coastal GasLink Pipeline Ltd. (CGL) through their ancestral territory which is in present-day British Columbia.

Despite Wet'suwet'en's opposition to the project and ignoring their right to decide what forms of economic development should take place on their ancestral lands with their free, prior and informed consent, construction of the pipeline began in 2019 and is proceeding.

In December 2018, the British Columbia Supreme Court granted CGL an injunction which criminalizes land defenders if they attempt to physically impede pipeline construction, counsel others to do the same, or approach within 10m of pipeline workers or intimidate pipeline workers.

Since the injunction, Canadian police and CGL's private security company (Forsythe Security) have been intimidating, harassing and unlawfully surveilling land defenders. In this time, more than 75 land defenders have been arbitrarily arrested and detained in four large-scale police raids on Wet'suwet'en territory.

In 2022, the provincial government charged 20 land defenders with criminal contempt for allegedly disobeying the terms of the injunction order. Those who have gone to trial risk being sentenced to time in jail if found guilty.

For example, in January 2024, Sleydo' (Molly Wickham) and two other land defenders were found guilty of criminal contempt for violating the terms of the injunction. However, this conviction was based on peaceful actions they took to stop pipeline construction, such as blocking a road and building tiny houses on pipeline construction sites. Their trial is ongoing because the land defenders presented an application arguing that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police violated their human rights during the raids.

The Wet'suwet'en Nation has the right to live in safety, free from surveillance, harassment, racism, criminalization, and gender-based violence.

I appeal to you to Stop the criminalization of Wet'suwet'en and other indigenous land defenders.

Yours sincerely