



GIDIMT'EN CHECKPOINT

RESPECTING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
DECEMBER 20, 2019,**

Gidimt'en Statement re Guardian Article: "Canada police prepared to shoot Indigenous activists, documents show"

On December 20, the Guardian released an article detailing the contents of RCMP documents pertaining to the January 7, 2019 raid on the Gidimt'en Access Point. The documents confirm that RCMP were prepared to use lethal force, that they were willing to target and arrest unarmed Indigenous people and elders, and that they prepared to apprehend our children.

The RCMP violence that Indigenous land defenders faced on January 7 was intentional, tactical, state-sanctioned, and abhorrent. The documents viewed by the Guardian reveal more than insensitive language-- they reveal a coordinated strategy that supports the violent oppression of Indigenous people and the dispossession of our unceded lands.

During the January 7 raid, Molly Wickham was arrested and removed from her own territory at the Gidimt'en checkpoint. The extreme show of police force was intended to clear access for the Coastal GasLink pipeline company to access Unist'ot'en territory for pipeline construction. Both Unist'ot'en Healing Centre and Gidimt'en Access Point have experienced continuous police surveillance and harassment in the months following the raid.

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Quote from Sleydo' (Molly Wickham), Gidimt'en Checkpoint Spokesperson: "The facts released in the Guardian's exclusive article today to the Canadian and global public, reveal the reality of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples protecting our lands and RCMP since contact and continuing today. Here we are, nearly 2020 and we are still being threatened with violence, death, and the removal of our children for simply existing on our lands and following our laws.

"We have never ceded or surrendered our lands. This is an issue of rights and title with our sovereign nation, and RCMP are acting as mercenaries for industry. With terminology like "lethal overwatch," "sterilize the site," and the threat of child welfare removing our children from their homes and territory, we see the extent to which the provincial and federal governments are willing to advance the destruction of our lands and families for profit. The state has always removed our people from our lands to ensure control over the resources. This has never changed. At a time when the province has introduced the UNDRIP in legislation, the RCMP are occupying our territory for the sole purpose of protecting industry and ensuring extractive projects proceed unhindered.

We call on the general public, the politicians, the investors in this and other projects to put an end to the RCMP's interference in this dispute over title to Wet'suwet'en lands. We want to live free on our lands, without the constant threat of violence by CIRG (Community Industry Response Group) who are illegally occupying Gidimt'en territory."

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