



GIDIMT'EN CHECKPOINT

RESPECTING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -
JANUARY 28, 2019**

Coastal GasLink and RCMP Violating Gidimt'en Sovereignty and Own Agreement

Over the weekend Coastal GasLink willfully, illegally, and violently destroyed Gidimt'en cultural infrastructure and personal property on Gidimt'en territory without our consent. This was our infrastructure to be on our land and exercise our land-based culture. Coastal GasLink's attack on our cultural practices - with RCMP's active complicity - is an attack on our sovereignty and an attack on our way of life.

This is an area, at 44 km, where Coastal GasLink have not obtained permits and is not even included in their proposed plans. Coastal GasLink did not provide any copies of permits for work to be undertaken in Gidimt'en territory, nor does our cultural infrastructure constitute an 'obstruction' within the limits of the interim injunction. Therefore, Coastal GasLink has no permits, authority, or legal rights to dismantle our cultural site or property. They illegally destroyed Gidimt'en cultural infrastructure and property with the support of the RCMP, who watched this happen and acted as industry's private bodyguards. The RCMP have been notified of Coastal GasLink's illegal activity under their own law, and the Wet'suwet'en Access Point on Gidimt'en territory is pursuing criminal charges into destruction of property and mischief by Coastal GasLink.

MEDIA CONTACT

Jennifer Wickham
yintahaccess.com
yintahaccess@gmail.com
778-210-0067

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER:

[HTTPS://WWW.YINTAHACCESS.COM/MEDIA-
BACKGROUND](https://www.yintahaccess.com/media-background)



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This state and industry-enforced violence is happening just two weeks after militarized RCMP descended onto our unceded Gidimt'en territories to enforce a colonial court injunction. Unarmed and peaceful women and elders were faced with heavy assault rifles and the RCMP trespassing and invading on our unceded territories. Fourteen were arrested. One of those arrested was Gidimt'en Clan spokesperson Molly Wickham. This is a form of violence against Wet'suwet'en women, that is further violence on Wet'suwet'en lands and sovereignty.

Under 'Anuc niwh'it'en (Wet'suwet'en law), all Wet'suwet'en Clans have said no to Coastal GasLink and all pipelines on unceded Wet'suwet'en territories. The 22,000 square km of Wet'suwet'en Territory is divided into 5 clans and 13 house groups. Each clan within the Wet'suwet'en Nation has full jurisdiction under their law to control access to their territory. The Hereditary Chiefs are the Title Holders and maintain the authority and jurisdiction to make decisions on Wet'suwet'en lands. Coastal GasLink/TransCanada has not received free, prior, and informed consent from or made any agreement with our Hereditary Chiefs to do work on Wet'suwet'en lands.

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The whole world is watching and standing with us. Canada knows that its own actions are illegal. Our Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have maintained their use and occupancy of their lands and hereditary governance system to this date despite generations of colonial policies and big industries that aim to remove us from this land, assimilate our people, annihilate our culture, and ban our governing system. We live out our laws and cultural practices on our lands. Our medicines, our berries, our food, the animals, our water, our culture are all here since time immemorial. We will never allow Gidimt'en sovereignty to be violated.

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