

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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News Release

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UBCIC Calls for End to Surveillance and Intimidation of Tiny House Warriors and Indigenous Land Defenders

((X^wməθk^wəy^{əm} (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – August 20, 2021) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is deeply concerned for the safety and human rights of the Tiny House Warriors (THW) and Indigenous land defenders who are being subjected to an escalating regime of surveillance and intimidation for their opposition to the expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline (TMX) and the construction of associated work camps in unceded Secwepemc territory.

On July 23, 2021, the THW camp near Blue River, BC was invaded by people believed to be Trans Mountain Corporation workers and private security personnel. Continuing the historical and colonial patterns of violence against Indigenous peoples, these individuals dismantled THW security barricades, removed an installation of red dresses memorializing missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and installed steel fences and concrete barriers that limit the THW's access to water and other resources. Consistent with the state's long history of surveilling and intimidating Indigenous peoples on their own lands, intrusive, 24/7 surveillance technology was also installed, including towers with remote-operated cameras and automated sensors.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated, "The surveillance the Tiny House Warriors are facing is alarming and indicative of how industry and state – the Canadian government, Trans Mountain Corporation, and the RCMP – continue to breach and disregard the authority, jurisdiction, and inherent Title and Rights of Indigenous peoples. Given that the Tiny House Warriors have been consistently targeted for violence, criminalization, and racial profiling by the RCMP, we raise critical concerns and questions around the information, images, and data that are being gathered from any surveillance. Having private security monitor and intimidate Indigenous peoples on their own lands is unacceptable, and UBCIC calls for a strong response from the government and law enforcement to signal that Indigenous Title and Rights are

respected, and that the vilification, violence, hate speech, blackmail, intimidation, and surveillance that threaten these rights will not be tolerated.”

“Law enforcement and industry must conduct themselves according to Canada’s international and domestic human rights obligations, including those advanced and protected in BC’s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*,” stated Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-President. “We also remind Canada that in December 2019, the UN Committee on Eliminating Racial Discrimination issued a [decision](#) that urged Canada to cease construction of the TMX and until it secured the free, prior and informed consent from all the Secwepemc people. To date, Canada has done nothing to address the UN Committee’s concerns and has instead supported the intensification of the surveillance and policing of Indigenous land defenders.”

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer stated, “The Tiny House Warriors are a group of Indigenous women, families, and land defenders who are exercising their inherent right to live on their lands as their Ancestors have done since time immemorial. They are being targeted for upholding their sovereignty and opposing the construction of the TMX and associated work camps that are known for increasing the risks of violence, assault, and intimidation against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people.” Kukpi7 Wilson concluded, “The UBCIC condemns the racist and gender-based threats and violence that the Tiny House Warriors have experienced since their establishment and calls for the immediate end to the colonial intimidation tactics and around-the-clock monitoring they now face. UBCIC does not condone or support violence of any kind and remains committed to respecting the authority and jurisdiction of all First Nations so that we may work together to end any violent and discriminatory practices against peaceful land defenders.”

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca