

the Catalyst

Citizens for Public Justice

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Canada Has a Moral Obligation to Accept Climate Migrants

By Stephen Kaduuli

I oane Teitiota fled from Kiribati, an island country in the central Pacific, to New Zealand in 2010. He was the first human face of what have now been called “climate change refugees.” He applied for asylum based on rising sea levels in his country. “I’m the same as people who are fleeing war,” he said. “Those who are afraid of dying, it’s the same as me.” But his refugee claim was rejected, and in 2015 he was deported for overstaying his visa. As a result of his case, the government of New Zealand announced in 2017 that it was considering creating a visa category to help relocate Pacific island citizens displaced by climate change.

Teitiota’s case went all the way to the UN Human Rights Committee. On January 20, 2020, the committee ruled that climate migrants cannot be returned to countries where their lives might be threatened by the climate crisis. Experts say the judgment is the legal tipping point that opens the door to protection claims for people whose

lives and well-being have been threatened by the effects of climate change. While the judgment is not formally binding on countries, it points to legal obligations that countries have under international law.

The climate emergency is already upon us. Extreme weather has increased the level of human movement both within countries and across international borders. Canada and the rest of the developed world need to adopt an adequate and compassionate response to this crisis.

In 2018, there were 28 million newly displaced people across 148 countries. Natural disasters caused the movement of 17.2 million of them. As far back as 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted that the greatest single result of climate change could be human migration. In 2015 and 2016, millions of Africans from the Sahel region sought refuge in Europe, pushed by droughts and desertification due to climate change. This was set against the backdrop of erratic rainfall, land degrada-

tion, population growth, political instability, insecurity, and a lack of coherent environmental policies, the UN Environment Programme says. The region has become a barren land with poor soil and no water resources. Climate-related displacement and migration will continue to be a challenge for years to come.

Convention Refugees

The media often call these migrants “climate refugees.” This has caused some confusion because the term does not exist in international law.

Many experts on forced migration believe we should not use the term “climate refugees” because the 1951 UN Convention defines a refugee as a person who is outside their country of nationality and unwilling to return due to the fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

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In Review

On the Hill

In March, CPJ's senior policy analyst **Karri Munn-Venn** and public justice intern **Keira Kang** joined Climate Action Network Canada's Day on the Hill. They met with Conservative MP **Kerry-Lynne Findlay** (below), NDP MPs **Peter Julian** and **Laurel Collins**, and Green MP **Elizabeth May** to talk about the actions Canada needs to take to meet and exceed our climate commitments.



Barriers to Integration

CPJ published "Barriers to Integration: Social Exclusion Among Refugees in Canada," a report from our Fall 2019 social work intern **Halima Abdille**. The report explores the challenges and discrimination that refugees face when integrating into Canadian society, with a particular emphasis on their ability to find employment. Read the report at cpj.ca/barriers.

In the Community

On January 22, CPJ hosted Seeking Justice, a one-day conference in Ottawa to explore how systemic injustice can manifest itself in our city and our churches. **Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey** delivered the keynote address on "Racism, White Privilege and the Invention of the Myth of 'Race.'"

Karri Munn-Venn spoke to the January 25 gathering of the **A Rocha Ottawa Chapter** as part of their Climate Science and Christianity event. She was part of a panel that responded to a video presentation by evangelical climate scientist, **Dr. Katherine Hayhoe** titled "Christians, Climate Change and our Culture," where she highlighted CPJ's *Give it up for the Earth!* campaign as a response to the Christian call to climate action.

Natalie Appleyard, CPJ's socio-economic policy analyst, attended the **Kenosis**

Retreat, a weekend exploring healthy ways for white settlers to support people of colour in anti-racism work in Canada, with co-facilitation and accountability provided by people of colour. Natalie later shared reflections from this retreat with attendees at a **GBA + Conference** in Ottawa on a panel focused on intersectionality.

On February 21, **Karri** spoke as part of a panel at the **Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ottawa Student Seminar**. The panel offered reflections on the inner workings of social justice organizations and campaigns, highlighting the challenges and tremendous rewards of civil society engagement in working for social change.



In February and March, CPJ welcomed **Tony Campolo** (above) to the **Vancouver** area for several events exploring "why Christians should be involved in seeking social justice." Dr. Campolo spoke at New Life CRC in Abbotsford, Hope Community Church in Surrey, the Vancouver School of Theology, and Christ Church Cathedral Vancouver. CPJ is planning more events with Tony later this year. Sign-up for our e-newsletter at cpj.ca/JEN to make sure you hear about upcoming events!

Natalie spoke at **Trinity United Church** in Ottawa on Sunday, February 9. Using the parable of the sower, she invited people to consider how we can hear and act on the good news of the kingdom of God by addressing poverty and injustice.

Staff Updates



In January, CPJ welcomed **Jackie Romero** as our social work intern from Carleton University. Jackie brings a rich experience in front-line refugee resettlement as she joins CPJ's refugee rights work.

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Citizens for Public Justice's mission is to promote public justice in Canada by shaping key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing, and public dialogue. CPJ encourages citizens, leaders in society, and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God's call for love, justice, and the flourishing of creation.

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These experts include professor Alexander Betts of University of Oxford, who believes that reopening the 1951 convention to include the term would be impractical, and that it could overwhelm the mandate of the UNHCR and undermine the protections offered to convention refugees. Those protections include the right to safe asylum in the receiving country, with access to medical care, schooling and the right to work, so refugees can become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Nina Birke-land, a senior adviser on disaster and climate change for the Norwegian Refugee Council, thinks reopening it, as nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiments sweep across North America and Europe, might make things worse for the people the convention aims to protect.

The UNHCR has refused to grant these migrants refugee status. This is in part due to lack of resources to address their needs. Instead, it designates them “environmental migrants.”

Other scholars, such as Aurelie Lopez and Jessica B. Cooper, argue that the 1951 convention should be interpreted to include “environmental migrants” as a “social group.” Still others say that “government-induced environmental degradation” should be deemed a form of persecution.

Environmental Migrants

Strictly speaking, becoming a refugee means crossing an internationally recognized border. Since environmental migration can also take place within a country, referring to these migrants as “refugees” is inaccurate. Those displaced within their own country are recognized by the UNHCR as “internally displaced persons.”

A better way to describe this group is to clarify our understanding of climate or environmental migrants. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines environmental migrants as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their homes or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and move either within their country or abroad.”

Climate migrants are not refugees, but they deserve the same protections as convention refugees. The intersection of climate change and migration requires new, nimble, and comprehensive solutions. The IOM encourages the full use of all existing bodies of domestic, regional, and international laws on displacement and disaster management to find ways of accommodat-



Photo Credit: UN Women Asia and the Pacific

ing environmental migrants.

At the global level, we must ensure that national and international laws accommodate climate migrants.

A Canadian Response

Canada also needs to step up in response to the crisis of climate migration. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), the primary federal legislation regulating immigration, is not designed to accommodate climate migrants. But a parliamentary background paper from 2010 says that “if Canada decided to extend refugee-type protection to climate migrants, legislative changes would not necessarily be required. Regulatory changes or policy direction alone could suffice.”

There are three areas of the IRPA that could be adjusted to accommodate climate migrants:

- The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship could temporarily suspend removal orders for people who become displaced while in Canada. This was done for Haitian visitors who were in Canada and could not go back to their country after the 2010 earthquake.
- Permanent residency could be granted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

- Refugees can apply to immigrate through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program.

What’s more, Canada has an ethical obligation to respond.

Despite its small population, Canada is complicit in the climate crisis. It is the 9th largest climate polluter in the world. It has disproportionately benefited from the combustion of fossil fuels, as one of the top five producers of oil and gas. Most Canadians have benefited greatly from the wealth generated by the fossil fuel boom. The country is wealthy, and it has enough resources to adapt to climate-related stressors and to help developing countries to respond to climate change.

Canada has a critical role to play in addressing the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the meantime, we must also do more to accommodate climate migrants. By clarifying existing laws and reinforcing mechanisms to resettle these migrants, Canada can live up to its reputation as a welcoming land for refugees.

Stephen Kaduuli is the refugee rights policy analyst at CPJ.

This article originally appeared in Policy Options.





What Does an Inclusive Just Transition Look Like?

By Keira Kang

Right now, Canada is desperately trying to reconcile the environment and the economy. For many, a just transition is a way forward, as it includes a shift from an economy that is primarily dependent on resource extraction to a green economy. At the same time, it provides support for workers whose livelihoods depend on carbon-intensive industries.

But some of our thinking on just transitions has left out the most marginalized voices in Canadian society.

A just transition strives to ensure that green jobs enable people to thrive and obtain a decent quality of life. A significant part of Canada's just transition goals revolve around respecting the tremendous economic contributions of fossil fuel workers who are at risk of losing their jobs. Research by the International Labour Organization suggests that globally we can expect to see an initial loss of 6 million jobs. Fortunately, global green transition strategies will result in an additional 24 million new jobs in renewable energy generation, electric transportation, and energy efficiency. The current conversation around just transition strategies focuses on ensuring that workers in carbon-intensive industries receive effective training for a successful transition into a zero-emissions economy. This includes relocation apprenticeships, increased income support, pension bridges for older workers and continued formal education programs.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) notes that the main recipients of the federal government's current transition policy benefits are Canadian-born white males working in oil-dependent industries, who earn an average median income of over \$130,000 per year. Racialized Canadians, women, and Indigenous peoples are far less likely to benefit from the tremendous long-term profits brought by a zero-carbon economy, given their very limited representa-

tion in oil and gas industries.

Racialized immigrants from the Global South face barriers to work in Canada. Due to a lack of professional networks, discriminatory hiring practices, and inadequate financial resources, it can be difficult for them to get apprenticeships and find employment in skilled trades. As a result, they often need to resort to low-skill, low-paying jobs that do not match their skill sets or their education.

Over 19 per cent of racialized immigrants face household food insecurity in Canada. Labour researchers Foster and Barnetson found that low-skilled workplaces tend to possess higher rates of systemic racism. This leads to a negative cycle of discrimination as racialized immigrants are considered undeserving of better employment opportunities in an advancing economy.

The CCPA's research suggests that female workers in energy industries earn significantly less than their male counterparts: 17 per cent less in coal mines and 23 per cent less in the electricity sector. A government report found that over 75 per cent of oil and gas workers were identified as males even though females occupy almost half of the total workforce in Alberta. Females make significant contributions to the total labour market. But their underrepresentation in skilled trades prevents them from being integrated equally into a greener workforce.

Indigenous workers are faced with a different set of barriers and difficulties in the transition process. A 2016 Amnesty International report states that, "Indigenous peoples whose lands and resources provide the basis for the wealth generated in the region, are excluded from a meaningful role in decision-making and bear a greater burden" compared to non-Indigenous workers. Indigenous workers are 12 per cent more likely to be precariously employed and earn 7 per cent less than non-Indigenous em-

ployees among full-time construction workers. The evidence suggests that there is a high disparity between Indigenous and white workers that must be addressed, as the economic and physical precarity faced by Indigenous workers is clearly not prioritized in just transition policies.

Racialized Canadians, women, and Indigenous peoples historically have had limited access to economic development in the labour force. And so the federal government's just transition policies must address these environmental and socio-economic inequalities.

As we shift towards a more stable and secure diversified economy, an inclusive just transition means moving away from the systems of oppression that are central to Canada's extractive industries. The federal government must invest in stronger initiatives on anti-oppressive work environments, diversify the skilled trades workforce and implement an intersectional lens in policy frameworks.

These actions will help to amplify the rights of marginalized workers and those excluded in the transitioning process.

With inclusive social protection programs and united action from our governments, we can ensure that our policies, funds, and structures for a just transition are accessible to all workers, employers, and communities. Through these efforts, we can work towards creating a sustainable economy built on social solidarity and climate justice.

Only then will we move towards an inclusive just transition — one that truly leaves no one behind.



Keira Kang is CPJ's public justice intern.

Photo Credit: Allisdare Hickson



Lent and Discipleship in the Era of Climate Crisis

By Monica Tang

The season of Lent calls us to re-evaluate our daily lives and to consider setting aside a habit or indulgence to adopt a practice that brings us closer to our dependence on God. Lent is a season that calls us to consider ourselves as believers and disciples, and not just consumers or citizens. Lent calls us to re-examine our ways of life and their impact on our neighbors and God's creation and to live a life of integrity.

The word integrity stems from the word "integer," which means wholeness.

Steve Garber, my professor at Regent College, always emphasizes the importance of living the seamless life, where our faith effortlessly flows to our actions and public engagement in the world.

In the era of a climate crisis, appeals for personal actions and political actions vie for our attention. We are bombarded by tips on "how to go green" and advertisements for energy-efficient appliances or home features. We are invited to join a direct action, support a political candidate, or donate to a campaign. It can be confusing to decide which action to pursue and which action is most effective in addressing climate change.

As Christians, we have a theological framework for understanding both the role of personal sin and systemic sins as it contributes to the climate crisis. Our individual carbon footprints are tied to the energy and political systems that we live in.

Therefore, both personal action and political action matters to counteract and respond to those sins.

Personal actions matter because they help build discipline and habits. As I bring my cloth bag to the farmers market or gro-

cery store, I am reminded of how reusing my own cloth bags means that I am not enabling plastic pollution. As I choose to make and eat a vegetarian meal, I am reminded of the impacts of factory-farming agriculture on the land and about its greenhouse gas emissions. I can thoughtfully and intentionally choose another path other than the path of least resistance. Collectively, personal actions can have up to a 40 per cent impact on emissions. We shouldn't dismiss them.

But personal actions are not enough in themselves to affect societal change. The

"It's important to pair personal lifestyle changes and acts of discipleship with bold action in public life."

scale of climate change cannot be solved by personal actions alone, even if we all collectively went vegan, changed our light bulbs, or stopped driving. So once I've changed my diet to eat less meat and dairy, only participating in creative direct action.

use public transportation, and changed all the lightbulbs in my apartment, what do I do next?

Last December, I attended the UN COP25 Climate Conference. There, I heard first-hand about the impacts of climate change on the poor and vulnerable. I heard from youth delegates in Chile concerned about water shortages caused by melting ice in the Andes. I heard from pastors in Africa heartbroken by the impacts of climate-induced flooding in their communities. It reinforced for me that we were not going to be able to affect climate change with personal actions alone.

It's important to pair personal lifestyle changes and acts of discipleship with bold action in public life. That may involve writing a letter to a Member of Parliament or a Minister calling them to continue to act on Canada's Paris Agreement targets; supporting a local candidate; signing a petition; or

participating in creative direct action.

Our group Earthkeepers has participated in CPJ's *Give it up for the Earth!* campaign for several years, hosting an event during Lent. While we focus on education and outreach with Christian communities and encourage people to participate in advocacy, we also value the importance of encouraging people to take personal action. *Give it Up for the Earth!* is a good reminder that we need to practice what we preach and demonstrate through our own lives and examples that every action matters.

Christ doesn't just ask us to renovate one part of our lives without addressing other aspects of our lives. As we pursue justice and peace, that means taking personal actions that demonstrate a new and transformed life, and public action to be a witness to our love for God, our neighbours, and creation.

Are you ready to *Give it up for the Earth!*?

Go to cpj.ca/pledge to make your personal commitment and to call on the federal government to increase its climate ambition by investing in a National Just Transition and Decarbonization Strategy.

Monica Tang is a policy advisor and student at Regent College.





When Justice and Faith Meet

By Willard Metzger

The overlap between CPJ's three main policy areas is evident: many refugees are thrust into poverty; and those in poverty are the most adversely impacted by climate change. All people interested in the common good should be concerned about these policy issues.

As a faith-based organization, rooted in the Christian tradition, CPJ views these areas of concern as a natural place of engagement. Most religious expressions adhere to 'the golden rule' of loving your neighbour as you love yourself. Much of the activist activity is prompted by love: love of creation, love of neighbour, love of God.

I routinely hear young adults express joy at discovering CPJ. They are especially excited to find a justice-seeking organization that is rooted in the Christian tradition. Already in the Justice Tour in 2015, I recall a young adult voice in Vancouver lamenting that the church has not stood for a significant justice issue in her lifetime. More recently in Calgary, young adults expressed a keen desire to be engaged in justice causes but have difficulty finding like-minded people in their faith community. A young adult in Ottawa was thrilled to discover CPJ excitedly stating, "I had no idea that there was a Christian-based organization that is also active in social justice!"

The implication is not so subtle. Many young adults have felt the absence of justice seeking in their faith expression experience. I find this disturbing.

Mother Teresa understood the meaning of Jesus identifying himself with the hungry, thirsty, sick, and imprisoned. Actions of love

and solidarity with the disadvantaged is experienced by Jesus: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of one of these brother and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Mother Teresa realized that through serving those in need she discovered "Jesus in his most distressing disguise." In other words, she recognized the eyes of Jesus in the eyes of the poor. She heard the lament of Jesus in the voice of the disadvantaged.

I wonder if we might be courageous enough to apply this same principle to the current challenge of faith expression in Canada. Can we recognize the voice of Jesus in the young adult lament that is yearning for more active justice seeking within their faith expression?" A worship experience that is solely focused on self is merely feeding

"Can we recognize the voice of Jesus in the young adult lament that is yearning for more active justice seeking within their faith expression?"

the ills of an ego-centric marketing society. Fulfillment isn't attained in obtaining more. Fulfillment is realized in working towards an end where all can thrive and grow.

Perhaps CPJ can be an avenue that can help faith restore its original purpose of expressing love for God by expressing love for others. For increasingly more young adults, organizations like CPJ are a balm of hope restoring their ability to bring together faith and justice.

To provide more opportunities for this to happen, CPJ has initiated a new strategic plan to develop local chapters in key geographic locations. Local chapters of volunteers will provide opportunity for local expressions of solidarity with the disadvantaged and all of creation. And the accumulation of local activity will greatly

enhance the advocacy and lobbying success at the federal government level.

I have been getting increasingly excited to see the mobilization of youth and young adults. They are no longer willing to sit idly in the side lines watching ill-informed and misguided policies destroy the environment and weaken society. They are not willing to accept a society that exalts economy above morality.

This is an exciting time in history! And CPJ is eager to help the resurgence of altruistic activity. A healthy society depends on this recovery. And communities of faith should be on the leading edge of this movement.

If you are interested in being part of these new local chapters, CPJ would love to hear from you! Urgency left isolated turns quickly to despair. But urgency expressed in solidarity and community can become an unstoppable movement.

For the love of God; and the love of neighbour, may it be so!



Willard Metzger is CPJ's executive director.

Photo Credit: Martin Luther University College, CPJ's 2019 Fall Tour event in Waterloo.



A Public Justice House of Our Own

By David Pollock

There was a lot of excitement here at CPJ in February. For the first time in our history, we made a historic move to a home of our own.

I arrived at CPJ in June 2010 to take up duties of finance and administration. At the time, CPJ was just beginning to recover from the financial downturn and a burden of debt. Our wonderful supporters and members stepped up then so we could carry on with the mission of justice. I was aware then of the high costs of rental in the Ottawa core — close to Parliament — where we wanted to be and thought that long-term, buying our own place would be ideal. It would lower our occupancy costs, give us some control over building related environmental care, and free up more resources to support

key work on refugee rights, ending poverty, and promoting climate justice.

Under Joe Gunn's leadership, we launched a five-year campaign in 2013 called "Building Public Justice Together" and began the serious work of saving toward the dream of a "home of our own." It was hard slogging. At the end of the campaign we had grown our programs but did not have enough to contemplate buying a building. We agreed as an organization that the generous bequests which came year-by-year would be put into a reserve fund, some of which could be used for house purchase. But it was still not enough.

Then, in 2016 The Sisters of Saint Ann made a truly wonderful endowment to CPJ in the amount of \$500,000, the interest of which was to be used to support our program work.

In 2019, now under the leadership of

our new Executive Director Willard Metzger, we sought out a possible property that we could own, not rent.

Once we had found a heritage building near our current offices, the quest for funds began in earnest. We approached the Sisters of Saint Ann to explore whether we might borrow money from the endowment to be repaid within ten years. Our long-term goals were aligned — releasing more financial resources to support CPJ's mission and program. Purchasing a property would mean

both rental income and lower office costs to help use accomplish this. And so, an agreement was struck.

Over the Christmas season, we also made an appeal to our membership to support the purchase of our own home. We received

multiple special gifts and a strong response from many members across Canada. Thanks be to God.

With this financial support, negotiations for the MacLaren property proceeded. On January 27, 2020, the property at 334 MacLaren Street in downtown Ottawa became ours!

That dream of our own house is now a reality thanks to so many supporters and donors who have made it all possible.

If we can continue to find support to pay down various expenses and our mortgage quickly, we will be in an excellent position going forward.

When dreams become reality, reality also pays us a visit. We have painted our new offices, found office movers, and contracted snow plowing services. We are also blessed to have Walter Neutel, a CPJ member and retired archivist, to help us negoti-

ate a home for our CPJ historical archives so we do not let them languish in our new basement.

One moment of considerable drama arose when we found that the previous insurance agent was pulling out of support for heritage buildings. We found this to be true of every insurance supplier we could find. With just hours to spare before we needed to purchase insurance to meet our offer agreements, we were accepted by Ecclesiastical Insurance, a provider to many older churches across Canada and in England. Our agent had simply never heard of them!

In the coming years, we hope to explore the feasibility of installing solar panels on the roof. At the very least we now control our own thermostat.

Do come and visit us if you are ever in Ottawa. We'll put on the coffee.

"The dream of our own house is now a reality thanks to so many supporters and donors who have made it all possible."

It's not too late to support CPJ's purchase of a house. To make your contribution, please go to cpj.ca/donate and select "House Fund" when you donate.



David Pollock is the coordinator of finance and administration at CPJ.

Statement of Solidarity With the Wet'suwet'en



CPJ stands in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation hereditary chiefs and land defenders, who are being removed from their sovereign territory by the RCMP and the government of Canada. We are filled with gratitude for the protection, care, and honour they give to the land and water. We urge the Canadian government, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, government ministers, and police forces to stop the expansion of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, an extractive industrial project that would span over 400 miles and destroy Indigenous land, water, air, and culture.

CPJ's executive director, Willard Metzger, signed on to this church leaders' statement issued on February 6, under the leadership of Toronto Urban Native Ministry:

Peace be with you,

In solidarity with our Wet'suwet'en relatives, we call upon the government of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to immediately cease their occupation, arrests, and trespassing on Wet'suwet'en sovereign territory.

In a public statement made yesterday, the RCMP have asserted that they will arrest any persons who will not leave their camps on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory. Wet'suwet'en law precedes and supersedes Canadian law on Wet'suwet'en land. The militarized forced removal of Wet'suwet'en from their own territory, for the economic benefit of fracked natural gas Coastal GasLink's 670km pipeline is consistent with the colonial practices of genocide. These un-

lawful occupations and tactics violate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Wet'suwet'en Clan Chiefs hold sole title to their unceded territory and unanimously do not support the construction of the pipeline. The pipeline project would mar the landscape, cutting down trees, harming migration patterns of animals, and putting the entire watershed at risk of a pipeline leak and contamination. Furthermore, the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA people found that there is a direct connection between resource extraction projects and increased violence against and within Indigenous communities. The migration of settler labourers to pipeline projects sites has been connected to increased sexual harassment, murder, rape, sexual assault, the influx of drugs and alcohol, increased conflict and policing, and the undermining of Indigenous self-determination in their communities.

We are deeply concerned about the militarized arrests, pressure and trespassing presence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on Wet'suwet'en sovereign territory. We are alarmed by the RCMP's establishment of an "Exclusion Zone" - which infringes on freedom of movement of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, with the exclusion of media from witnessing and documentation, and bars clan members from accessing their own lands. These acts of intimidation, occupation, and restriction are harmful and reverses us back to the pass system era, which treats Indigenous peoples like prisoners on

their own territory.

The RCMP does not hold the jurisdiction or right to arrest sovereign Wet'suwet'en peoples on their own unceded Nation and territory. The practice of forced relocation, arrest, detention, and criminalization of Wet'suwet'en, Indigenous peoples, and their allies on Wet'suwet'en land is an egregious and shameful violation of international law. We call upon the RCMP and Canadian government to respectfully honour Wet'suwet'en Clan law, whereby ceasing their surveillance, occupation, and militarized violence on Indigenous land.

The continual prioritizing of the interests of private sector and resource extraction over the rights of Indigenous Nations, laws, treaties, lands, and waters, condemns our collective wellbeing and future. We call upon the RCMP and government of Canada to immediately halt all violations and assaults on Indigenous water and land defenders. We stand with the Wet'suwet'en and their allies who have made significant sacrifices on the front lines of this violation on their territory. We honour and respect their commitment to defending the wellbeing of the waters, lands, creatures, people, and sovereignty of Wet'suwet'en.

To see a list of all signatories to this statement, or to sign-on yourself, go to cpj.ca/wetsuweten.

Photo Credit: Jason Hargrove