

WET'SUWET'EN ACTION TIMELINE

BY YA MONTENEGRO, THE WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR A FREE WALLMAPU, AND LEVELLER STAFF

The forcible removal of Wet'suwet'en from their land by the RCMP so that a pipeline company could access the territory was years in the making.

Granted an injunction, the RCMP moved in on behalf of TC Energy's Coastal GasLink pipeline project to forcibly clear out land defenders at the Gidimt'en checkpoint in January 2019. One year later, after Wet'suwet'en peacefully evicted CGL from their land, a large RCMP force moved in again to remove all Indigenous bodies from the land.

In response to this series of raids, Indigenous peoples and allies across so-called Canada and beyond have taken to the streets and the barricades. Rail blockades set up by Mohawk and Gitksan land defenders halted most rail traffic in the country, precipitating a national crisis.

This article charts the solidarity response to the Wet'suwet'en call for action and the demand that the RCMP completely withdraw from their lands. It begins on Feb. 6, with the first wave of arrests on Wet'suwet'en Territory....

FEB 6

In response to multiple arrests of Indigenous land defenders in Wet'suwet'en territory, members of the Mohawk community of Tyendinaga begin a rail blockade, stopping all rail traffic between Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal.

FEB 8

The RCMP extends their exclusion zone over most of Gidimt'en Clan Territory of the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Statements from the Unist'ot'en camp condemn the violations of Wet'suwet'en law, Canadian law, and of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) committed by the RCMP on February 6th, 7th, and 8th. Mohawks of Kahnawake on Montréal's South Shore begin blocking a CP rail line serving commuters on Exo's Candiac line in to Montréal.

FEB 10

RCMP arrest Unist'ot'en matriarchs including Freda Huson (Chief Howihkat), Brenda Michell (Chief Geltiy), and Karla Tait while holding a ceremony to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Militarized Royal Canadian Mounted Police Units advance further into Wet'suwet'en, arresting 21 Indigenous land defenders and supporters over the weekend.

Dozens of rail and highway blockades and occupations to government offices break out across so-called Canada in support of Wet'suwet'en. Actions throughout the day include:

RAIL BLOCKADES

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER TERRITORY: Haudenosaunee land defenders block CN rail lines carrying freight from morning until noon. Land defenders erected tipis and banners in a show of solidarity.

Blockades at Tyendinaga and Kahnawake continue

OCCUPATIONS

OTTAWA: Indigenous youth occupy the Ministry of Justice to demand that Justice Minister David Lametti have the RCMP stand down from Wet'suwet'en territory.

TORONTO: Indigenous and settler youth occupy the office of Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett, the federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

VICTORIA: A group of Indigenous youth occupy the steps of the BC legislature.

EDMONTON: Extinction Rebellion Edmonton and Beaver Hills Warriors occupy a central Bank of Montréal branch.

FEB 11

Actions throughout the day include:

RAIL BLOCKADES

LISTUGUJ: Mik'maq land defenders block rail traffic in Listuguj, Mik'maq territory near Gaspé, Québec.

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan land defenders block rail traffic between Prince Rupert and Prince George.

SQUAMISH: Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam land defenders block all CN Rail traffic into the Vancouver ports.

HALIFAX: Mik'maq land defenders and supporters block CN Rail and shut down the Halifax Port throughout the day, ending at 5PM.

Blockades at Tyendinaga and Kahnawake continue.

OCCUPATIONS

TORONTO: Indigenous youth occupying the constituency office of Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett are removed by the RCMP after a meeting with the Minister.

WINNIPEG: Hundreds of land defenders block Portage and Main during the evening rush hour.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders occupy the intersection of Cambie and Broadway overnight.

Occupations in Ottawa and Victoria continue

FEB 12

The RCMP lifts the exclusion zone. Actions continue to spread further across the country in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en.

RAIL BLOCKADES

WINNIPEG: Indigenous land defenders block all rail traffic, braving -40° C windchill.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Listuguj and New Hazelton. A second blockade is set up at Tyendinaga.

OCCUPATIONS

OTTAWA: Indigenous Youth vacate Ministry of Justice after a press conference stating "reconciliation is dead." On their way out, they block the intersections of Lyon and Wellington at noon. The youth return to the streets in the evening and block traffic at various locations in the downtown core.

HALIFAX: Land defenders briefly occupy the lobby of a downtown office where Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland was scheduled to speak.

VICTORIA: Indigenous youth and land defenders lock down the BC legislature to disrupt the Throne Speech. Occupation on the steps of the British Columbia legislature continues.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders block Granville Street Bridge, following an overnight stay at Cambie and Broadway.

FEB 13

Via Rail announces they will be shutting down all service across the country; CN to do the same in eastern Canada. Canadian media reports the loss of millions of

dollars over the delays and cancellations. BC Premier John Horgan agrees to meet Hereditary Chiefs.

RAIL BLOCKADES

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs agree to remove their blockade in light of Horgan's decision.

MAGNETAWAN: Anishinaabe land defenders blockade rail lines near Magnetawan First Nation on highway 529, a few kilometres from Sudbury.

COQUITLAM: Land defenders blockade a CP train yard in unceded Kwikwetlem territory.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

VICTORIA: Land defenders receive a court injunction approved by the BC Supreme Court.

SASKATOON: Land defenders march and block roads throughout the downtown area.

NELSON: Land defenders occupy a Bank of Montréal branch, demanding divestment from the Coastal GasLink LNG.

FEB 15

Solidarity actions continue and spread further across the country.

RAIL BLOCKADES

VAUGHAN: Land defenders block the CP Macmillan Rail Yard in Vaughan, just north of Toronto.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders block CN Rail in East Vancouver carrying freight to the United States.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

TORONTO: Land defenders block the intersection of Yonge and Dundas for several hours.

WASWANIP: James Bay Cree land defenders slow traffic on bridge crossing in Waswanipi, northern Québec.

FEB 17

Mass marches break out across Canada as blockades and occupations continue

RAIL BLOCKADES

MORRIS, MANITOBA: Indigenous land defenders block CN Rail just south of Winnipeg.

SAINT- PASCAL: Wet'suwet'en supporters block the railway in

Saint- Pascal, Québec.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

TORONTO: Over 10,000 people march from Christie Pitts to Queen's Park, blocking traffic along Bloor Street and major intersections.

OTTAWA: Indigenous youth lead a march of over 500 people, blocking the Rideau Canal and major intersections of the downtown core, and ending the march outside the Prime Minister's office on Wellington Street.

MONTREAL: Land defenders led by Indigenous youth march and blockade major intersections, including Sherbrooke and McGill College Avenue.

SASKATOON: Land defenders demonstrate in downtown Saskatoon, blockading major intersections and bridges.

OCCUPATIONS

MORRIS, MANITOBA: Indigenous land defenders block Highway 75 leading to the United States, slowing traffic.

THOUSAND ISLANDS: Land defenders blockade the Thousand Islands Bridge along the US Border, impeding international traffic for two and a half hours.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: Mik'maq land defenders slow down traffic on the approach to the Confederation Bridge.

FEB 18

Wet'suwet'en Chiefs declare they "would not be negotiating while under the barrel of a gun," demanding the demilitarization of the territory in order to begin talks with Justin Trudeau and John Horgan.

FEB 19

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs head to Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory to meet and thank those that have stood with them against the encroachment of the RCMP in the nation's battle against the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Meanwhile, CN Rail announces mass layoffs – allegedly due to the protests, despite having previously announced layoffs in November. Later, far-right groups associated with Yellow Vests and United We Roll tear down a barricade in Edmonton.

RAIL BLOCKADES

EDMONTON: Indigenous land defenders block CN and VIA Rail

traffic west of the city; far-right groups tear down a barricade.

SAINT- LAMBERT: Land defenders shut down the railway in Saint- Lambert, south of Montréal.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Morris, and Listuguj.

FEB 20

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs meet Mohawk leaders of Tyendinaga and tell supporters to continue mobilizing amidst ongoing pressure from the federal government to lift the blockades.

Public Safety Minister Bill Blair announces the RCMP will leave Wet'suwet'en territory on the condition that the Wet'suwet'en "keep the road clear" and abide by the court injunctions to maintain the construction of the pipeline.

The Hereditary Chiefs reject the offer, which simply repeats RCMP and CGL demands from the beginning.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAMLOOPS: Secwepemc land defenders blockade CP Rail lines across from Neskonlith Hall near the town of Case, BC.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint- Lambert, and Listuguj.

FEB 21

Bowing to industry concerns, the Prime Minister states, "The injunctions must be obeyed and barricades must come down."

Trudeau adds "we have reached the limit of what we can do unilaterally as the Federal Government, and now it is up to Indigenous leaders to find solutions to continue on the path of reconciliation."

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and Mohawk leaders hold a joint press conference and remain resolute in demanding the full retreat of the RCMP from their traditional territory.

RAIL BLOCKADES

CALEDONIA, NB: Mik'maq land defenders blockade CN Rails just north of Moncton. The land defenders are served an injunction a few hours later.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Saskatoon, Elsipogtog, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

CALGARY: Indigenous land defenders interrupt shopping in a mall in downtown Calgary.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint- Lambert, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

KAMLOOPS: Secwepemc land defenders return to block CP Rail lines after vacating it on Feb 21.

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan land defenders return to block CP Rail

FEB 22

Thousands defy government demands to bring down solidarity barricades. Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs meet with Mohawk leaders of Kahnawake.

RAIL BLOCKADES

SASKATOON: Indigenous youth, women, disabled LGBTQ2S, and inner-city community members block CN Rail lines in Saskatoon's Pleasant Hill neighbourhood. The land defenders are harassed by white supremacist groups.

ELSIPOGTOG: Mik'maq land defenders move to Salmon Arm River near Elsipogtog and blockade CN Rail lines.

MASHEUTATSH: Indigenous land defenders and allies blockade CN Rail lines near Saguenay, Québec. Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint- Lambert, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

TORONTO: Over 2,000 people march in defense of the Wet'suwet'en, ending with an Indigenous-led round dance at Nathan Phillips Square.

CAPE BRETON: Indigenous land defenders slow traffic on the Canso Causeway.

SALABERRY-DE-VALLEYFIELD: Land defenders demonstrate downtown in Salaberry-de-Valley-Field, Québec.

CATTARAUGUS, NY, USA: Seneca land defenders blockade a bridge on the Cattaraugus Reservation in upstate New York.

FEB 23

OPP give an ultimatum for Mohawks of Tyendinaga to remove barricades at midnight.

RAIL BLOCKADES

SAINT- LAMBERT: Land defenders and allies vacate premises after police encircle the blockade.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Saskatoon, Elsipogtog, and Listuguj.

FEB 24

Police raid Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, arresting 10 people. Blockades, occupations and protests explode across the country.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAMLOOPS: Secwepemc land defenders return to block CP Rail lines after vacating it on Feb 21.

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan land defenders return to block CP Rail

traffic between Prince Rupert and Prince George. Police arrest 14 Gitksan land defenders overnight, including three Hereditary Chiefs.

HAMILTON: Land defenders blockade CN Rails near York Boulevard.

Blockades continue at Kahnawake, Saskatoon, Elsipogtog, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

KAHNAWAKE: Mohawk land defenders block the Mercier Bridge in the morning and afternoon hours. Mohawk Warriors barricaded the same location during the standoff at Oka in 1990, making the site a symbol of Indigenous struggle.

KANESATAKE: Mohawk land defenders blockade Highway 344. Mohawk Warriors barricaded the same location during the standoff at Oka in 1990.

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER TERRITORY: Six Nations land defenders blockade the highway bypass between Argyle and Greens Road near the town of Caledonia. Six Nations land defenders blockaded the same during the reclamation of Kanonhsataton in 2006.

SAULT STE MARIE: Anishinaabe land defenders block the international bridge to the United States.

VANCOUVER: Indigenous land defenders and allies defy a court injunction by blocking the entrance to the Port of Vancouver.

VICTORIA: Indigenous land defenders defy a court injunction and occupy the front steps of the British Columbia legislature. Indigenous youth chain themselves to the doors to prohibit entry to the building.

Blockades continue at Kahnawake, Saskatoon, and Elsipogtog.

PROTESTS

OTTAWA: Indigenous land defenders block multiple streets and intersections near Parliament. Police snipers watch the demonstration from a nearby building.

MONTREAL: Land defenders and allies organize a flash mob outside of Prime Minister Trudeau's constituency office.

FEB 25

Rail blockades, occupations, and protests continue and continue to break out following the OPP raid of the rail blockade on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

RAIL BLOCKADES

TORONTO: 500 land defenders block CP Rail lines at Lambton Arena during rush hour traffic, causing havoc at nearby Union Station. Police arrest 37 people overnight.

KAMLOOPS: Police encircle the camp and arrest three people, including one Hereditary Chief and his daughter.

HAMILTON: Land defenders and allies leave after police encircle the blockade, avoiding any arrests.

SHERBROOKE: Land defenders block CN Rail lines in Lennoxville, a suburb of Sherbrooke, Québec.

ABBOTSFORD: Land defenders block CN Rail lines in BC.

TYENDINAGA: Police remove the second blockade, but Mohawk land defenders continue to gather near the rail line.

The blockades in Kahnawake and Listuguj continue. Police serve Mik'maq land defenders in Listuguj with an injunction.

OCCUPATIONS

VANCOUVER: Several protestors are arrested by police, who remove the blockade at the Port of Vancouver only to see it re-established a few hours later.

VICTORIA: Land defenders block the Pat Bay Highway north of Victoria overnight.

Occupations continue at Sault Ste. Marie, Kanesatake, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and Victoria.

FEB 26

The Québec Superior Court approves an injunction presented by Canadian Pacific (CP) Rail against the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, which leaders of the nation reject outright. Mohawk Secretary of the Six Nations Confederacy Atsenhailen Kenneth Deer blasts

at press time (Mar. 2), high-level talks continue between Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and provincial and federal politicians. An agreement had been reached to recognize rights and title to be reviewed by the Wet'suwet'en people in the coming weeks. Yet no such agreement has been reached on the CGL pipeline, to which the Hereditary Chiefs remain adamantly opposed.

"We know that this is a long fight. We know that this is an intergenerational struggle, this is a revolution," said Molly Wickham, in a March 2 video posted to Twitter. Wickham, whose traditional name is Sleydo, is a spokesperson for the Gidimt'en camp of the Wet'suwet'en nation.

Protests and blockades continue, with a national student solidarity walk-out scheduled for March 4.

"This is the time to keep pushing, because now is the time to see and actualize and realize our hopes and dreams of liberation," Wickham concluded.

Québec Premier François Legault for insinuating arms are being used in the Kahnawake blockade to the national press.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAHNAWAKE: The blockade is reinforced by Mohawk community members and continues.

The Listuguj blockade continues.

OCCUPATIONS

VICTORIA: Land defenders vacated the Pat Bay Highway after being served an injunction by police.

SAULT STE MARIE: Anishinaabe land defenders walk onto the International Bridge for ceremony, closing the road for two hours.

WINNIPEG: Land defenders shut down Portage and Main, Winnipeg's most iconic intersection, for a round dance.

Occupations continue at Kanesatake, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and Victoria.

FEB 27

The RCMP finally agrees to end patrols in Wet'suwet'en territory, while CGL agrees to a two-day pause in work. This allows talks to begin between Hereditary Chiefs and federal and provincial cabinet ministers.

The talks were delayed a day when the Canadian and BC governments demanded the Hereditary Chiefs tell their supporters to stand down. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en issued a statement saying "In accordance with our Inuk Nu'at'en (our laws), the Wet'suwet'en cannot speak on other nation's behalf."

Various actions in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en continue, including railway blockades in Kingston, Montréal, and Tyendinaga, and a march in London that slowed highway and train traffic.