



Under 'Anuc niw'hit'en (Wet'suwet'en law and system of government) all five hereditary chiefs of the five clans of the Wet'suwet'en nation are openly opposed to the TransCanada liquefied natural gas pipeline that will be built through their territory.

The Wet'suwet'en, which is made up of five clans, never signed a treaty ceding their land to the government of Canada and they retain control of who enters it.

The structure of the Wet'suwet'en traditional system of government is built around the decisions of their hereditary chiefs who were never consulted, rather than their elected municipal leaders who were consulted instead. In the 1997 landmark case, the *Delgamuukw v British Columbia* case, which covers part of the Wet'suwet'en territory, previously found that the We'suwet'en people as represented by their hereditary leaders retained indigenous rights to their historical territory, and these were not to be "extinguished" by lack of a treaty.

However, in a reversal of precedent the RCMP have obtained a court injunction to forcibly clear an access point for construction crews to move into the territory. Currently police have set up an "exclusionary zone" to prevent access to the area – and have told those trying to access the roads they face arrest if they attempt to enter. With residents being barred from entering their traditional homes.

The RCMP's actions granted by this court injunction is a siege on violation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is an extension of the genocide that the Wet'suwet'en and have survived since contact, and a siege on a peaceful demonstration of free speech regarding resource projects they say they never consented to.

The past two years have been a turbulent time for indigenous rights. Last year, in February, a farmer named Gerald Stanley was acquitted by an all-white jury in the murder of Colten Boushie, a young Cree man.