



Press Release

CAP: Alberta's Bill 1 is Unconstitutional, Undemocratic and Unacceptable

June 18th 2020 (Ottawa, ON) – This week, the Alberta Legislature passed Bill 1, the so-called “Critical Infrastructure Defense Act”. This bill effectively criminalizes political dissent, including legitimate protest in the context of natural resource development, environmental protection and indigenous rights.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) condemns in the strongest terms Bill 1, as racist, undemocratic and unconstitutional. It violates the inherent right of all Indigenous people to protect their land, as well as the constitutional rights of all Canadians to express opposition to government policy through protest.

Under Bill 1, any person setting foot on construction sites or land used by pipelines, refineries, mines, highways, or any other “essential” project may be jailed for up to 6 months and fined tens of thousands of dollars. Organizations can be fined hundreds of thousands of dollars. Any project may be designated “essential” by the government at any time, regardless of justification.

“This bill protects corporate profits at the expense of our rights. Just when people are looking at police abuses, this bill adds fuel to the fire of systemic racism against Indigenous people” says Kim Beaudin, CAP National vice-Chief. “This is an unacceptable overreach. This bill gives free rein to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to racially profile, threaten and harass Indigenous people across Alberta. I can only wonder what comes next - exiling protesters to Siberian Gulags?”

The relationship between Indigenous people and the police continues to be shattered by the deaths of Indigenous people at the hands of police across Canada. Indigenous people killed by police since April 2020 alone include Chantel Moore, Rodney Levi, Eisha Hudson, Jason Collins, and Stewart Kevin Andrews.

“This could not send a more callous message towards Indigenous people.” said Kim Beaudin “Bill 1 is a message that reconciliation is dead in Alberta, killed by Jason Kenney, a bunch of oil executives and the RCMP.”

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The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is the national voice representing the interests of Métis, status and non-status Indians, and Southern Inuit Indigenous People living off-reserve. Today, over 80 per cent of Indigenous people live off-reserve.