



January 23, 2019

To Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and British Columbia Premier John Horgan:

A United Nations human rights body is calling on Canada to halt construction of the Site C dam because continued construction threatens the human rights of the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations and would violate Canada’s obligations under international human rights law.

**We, the undersigned, urge your governments to take immediate measures to suspend all permits and approvals for continued construction of the Site C dam pending further engagement with all affected First Nations.**

In December, the independent expert body that oversees compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination wrote to Canada’s High Commissioner to the UN in Geneva calling for an immediate halt to construction of Site C. This response, taken under an urgent action procedure intended to prevent or mitigate serious violations of this binding international convention, follows the decision of a BC court to allow construction of the dam to continue even though a fundamental Treaty rights challenge is still before the courts.

The UN Committee has given your governments until April 8th to provide information on “the steps taken to suspend the Site C dam until free, prior and informed consent is obtained.”

The message could not be clearer. Demonstrating your governments’ commitments to human rights, and abiding by Canada’s binding international obligations to eliminate racial discrimination, requires immediate compliance with the actions called for by the UN Committee.

The fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples in the Peace River Valley are at stake as is the credibility of your governments’ public commitments to reconciliation, and Canada’s reputation internationally as a defender of human rights.

The Site C project is inching closer to doing irreparable harm to the culture and heritage of the Treaty 8 First Nations – including inundation of thousands of graves and cultural sites – and to the plant and animal habitat on which these cultures depend.





In continuing construction of the Site C dam, the federal and provincial governments took a dishonourable step backward in their relations with Indigenous peoples, and now must take steps to repair those relationships by complying with the UN Committee and suspending construction of the dam.

We call on your governments to accept the UN Committee's recommendation that you seek independent expert advice on implementation of your obligations under international human rights law, including the responsibility to respect and uphold the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples.

On behalf of the following Nations and organizations:

Prophet River First Nation  
 West Moberly First Nations  
 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation  
 Mikisew Cree Free Nation  
 Alliance for Democracy  
 Amnesty International Canada  
 Canadian Friends Service Committee  
 (Quakers)  
 Fight C  
 KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice  
 Initiatives

KAIROS BC-Yukon  
 Keepers of the Athabasca  
 Keepers of the Water  
 Peace Valley Environment Association  
 Peace Valley Landowners Association  
 RAVEN Trust  
 Rolling Justice Bus  
 Slave River Coalition  
 Sierra Club BC  
 Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
 Wilderness Committee

