



PEACE RIVER VALLEY:

STRUGGLE TO PROTECT ANCESTRAL LANDS CONTINUES

First Nations people of the Peace River Valley have been campaigning to protect their ancestral lands from Site C, a proposed \$10 billion dam project that would flood the valley.

The Peace River Valley in northeastern British Columbia is a unique ecosystem that First Nations rely upon for hunting and fishing, gathering berries and sacred medicine, and holding ceremonies. Their ancestors are buried in this land. The proposed \$10 billion Site C dam would flood more than 80 km of the river valley. The severe impact on Indigenous peoples is beyond dispute. A United Nations human rights body has condemned the project. Craig Benjamin, Amnesty Canada's Campaigner for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reports on the latest in the struggle to stop the dam.

"We've never said no to the production of energy. We've said, let's protect the valley. It's the last piece of our backyard that's relatively untouched," said Chief Roland Willson of West Moberly First Nations.

Last summer, the West Moberly First Nations was in court trying to get temporary limits placed on the construction of the Site C dam—at least until the court could determine whether flooding the Peace River Valley would breach their Constitutionally-protected Treaty rights.

West Moberly First Nations' request for an interim injunction was vigorously opposed by the British Columbia government and was ultimately rejected by the court over concerns about the financial cost. As a result, BC Hydro has plunged ahead with clearcut logging, road construction and other activities in preparation for the eventual completion of the dam. Over the last year, construction activities have disrupted and devastated areas that West Moberly had identified as sacred sites and crucial habitat for the plant and animal species on which they depend.

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GRETA THUNBERG AWARDED AMNESTY'S HIGHEST HONOUR

In June, Amnesty International presented the 2019 Ambassador of Conscience Award to Greta Thunberg and the Fridays for Future climate strike movement. Starting in 2018, Thunberg, who at the time was aged 15, decided to miss school every Friday to protest outside the Swedish parliament until it took more serious action to tackle climate change. Her efforts to raise awareness of the climate crisis quickly went global, with more than one million young people from all over the world taking part in the Fridays for Future school strikes. On September 20, there will be a global climate strike. See page 12 for information on how you, too, can participate.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S VISION AND MISSION

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights.

RECEIVING ACTIVIST MAGAZINE

To receive Activist magazine, phone **1-800-AMNESTY (1-800-266-3789)** and confirm you are a supporter. Published in print three times a year, Activist is free to all Amnesty supporters who request it. Change of address or problems receiving Activist? Contact Sue McNamara at our National Office by email at smcnamara@amnesty.ca

BRANCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Fundraised revenue for the first five months of 2019 amounted to \$5.594 million, less than the amount of \$5.841 million which had been targeted in the budget, resulting in a shortfall from budget for fundraised revenue of \$247 thousand. Income from other sources amounted to \$45 thousand, resulting in total revenue for the five-month period of \$5.639 million.

Expenditures for the same period amounted to \$5.908 million, an amount which is less than the budgeted amount of \$6.031 million. In spite of the negative variances to date with respect to fundraised revenue, the Branch is in a healthy financial position going into the second half of the year.

Table of Revenue & Expenditure (in 000s of dollars)

	Actual to May 31	Budget to May 31
Revenues		
Fundraised	5,594	5,841
Other	45	30
Subtotal	5,639	5,871
Expenditures	5,908	6,031
Net Deficit	(269)	(160)

As the table depicts, there has been an actual net deficit from operations for the five-month period of \$269 thousand as compared to the budgeted net deficit of \$160 thousand. Due to the nature of the Branch's annual cash flow forecast, it had always been anticipated that the Branch would have a deficit by this time of the year. However, the most productive months of the year from a fundraising standpoint are from September to December and it is expected that the Branch will be in a good financial position as of the end of the year.

SEPTEMBER 2019
Published by Amnesty International
Canadian Section (ES)

EDITOR: David Griffiths
(dgriffiths@amnesty.ca)

**Activist is the result of the
collaborative efforts of numerous
people. Many thanks to everyone
who helped with this issue.**

NEXT PRINT ISSUE

The next issue will be mailed by
November 7, 2019. The deadline
to submit content for that issue
is October 10, 2019.

Canada Post—Canadian Publications Mail
Product Sales Agreement 40065443

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PEACE RIVER VALLEY: STRUGGLE TO PROTECT ANCESTRAL LANDS CONTINUES

(cover story continued)

The construction of the Site C dam represents such blatant disregard for the rights of Indigenous peoples that the United Nations' top anti-racism body has twice spoken out to call for a halt to the dam.

In 2017, during a regular review of Canada's human rights record, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed concern over the "irreversible damage" that would be caused by flooding the Peace River Valley. The Committee also condemned the fact that the dam was approved "despite the vigorous opposition of indigenous peoples affected by this project."

When construction continued, CERD issued a new statement in December 2018—under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure—again calling for a halt to the project so that Indigenous rights could be protected.

The condemnation from this UN human rights body is particularly significant given that both the federal government and the province of BC have committed to fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration seeks to protect Indigenous peoples from government decisions that ignore or undervalue their rights by requiring that development projects proceed only if free, prior and informed consent is given. These standards in the UN Declaration draw from longstanding work by CERD, which has advocated for free, prior and informed consent for the last three decades.

Canadian officials have tried to convince CERD that the destruction of the Peace River Valley is consistent with Canada's human rights obligations because they gave the First Nations the opportunity to agree to the project.

Chief Roland Willson of West Moberly First Nations with Dr. Gay McDougall, vice chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in Vancouver in June. Chief Willson said, "The UN's top anti-racism body has recognized that continued construction of the Site C dam is a serious threat to fundamental human rights. This latest statement from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination makes it clear that the federal and provincial governments have no claim to being human rights champions so long as they continue to ignore the impacts of Site C on our Treaty rights."

It's this kind of skewed logic—and minimization of Canada's human rights obligation—that has led CERD to also urge Canada to seek independent, expert advice on how to interpret and implement international standards for the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

The construction of the Site C dam represents such blatant disregard for the rights of Indigenous peoples that the United Nations' top anti-racism body has twice spoken out to call for a halt to the dam.

At this point, however, there is no excuse for the federal and provincial governments getting things so badly wrong in the Peace River Valley. As Dr. Gay McDougall, an international renowned expert on race and human rights, and the vice chair of CERD, said during a recent public lecture in Vancouver, "Consent is when you give it, not when you refuse it. It's not a secret formula."

Despite the devastation that has occurred over the past year, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have not given up the fight to protect the Valley. Chief Roland Willson of West Moberly says that he has taken heart from concerns expressed by CERD and that he believes the dam can still be stopped.

ACTIVISTS IN CANADA



© Aisling Vashi/Becca Schmittke/Amnesty International

In Toronto, on May 26, Amnesty's Business and Human Rights and Indigenous Rights Group was at the Pedestrian Sundays event in Kensington Market to promote Amnesty's campaign actions for earth, land and water defenders in Latin America.

When Amnesty national organizers met in Toronto in May, they called on Canada's federal government to ensure that the new corporate watchdog has independence and sufficient investigatory powers, which are needed if Canadian companies are to be held accountable for the human rights abuses they commit abroad.



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In Regina, on Saturday June 15, Amnesty supporters marched in the Queen City Pride parade to show solidarity with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities in Canada and around the world.

DON'T SEE YOURSELF ON THESE PAGES?

If you attend or organize an Amnesty International event in your community, please share your photographs with other Amnesty members across Canada. Email high-resolution images with captions to members@amnesty.ca.



GET READY TO KICK OFF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Whether you are getting your school or campus group up and running again for the new school year, or starting up a new group altogether, it's time to start planning and making sure you have everything you need!

1. Make sure you register your group so that we can ensure you get all the tools and resources you need and keep you updated on the latest actions, events and opportunities. We ask that all groups register each year so that we have the most up-to-date information for you. Register at amnesty.ca/youth-sign-up or email youth@amnesty.ca
2. Sign up for one of our online meet-and-greets. We will be hosting several online meet-and-greets in September for those running Youth and Student Groups. We will have three sessions—one for secondary schools, one for campus groups, and one for educators who are providing support to Youth and Student Groups. Let us know if you are interested in joining us for a meet-and-greet by emailing us at youth@amnesty.ca. Dates and times to be confirmed.

CONNECT WITH US AT:

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-  [TWITTER.COM/AMNESTYNOW](https://twitter.com/amnestynow)
-  [INSTAGRAM.COM/AMNESTYCANADA](https://instagram.com/amnestycanada)



YOUTH
NEWS

GET YOUR GROUP ON THE MAP

If you are a campus group, make it easy for new members to find you directly from our website by ensuring your group details are on the groups map at amnesty.ca/youth-groups-map

If your group is already on the map but needs its information updated, email us at youth@amnesty.ca and let us know what content needs to change and what that content is.

ATTENTION EDUCATORS!

Are you interested in helping support an Amnesty club at your school or bringing human rights into your classroom? We want to hear from you. We are developing new materials to support teacher advisors for Amnesty Youth and Student Groups and for those who would like to host a Write for Rights event in their school.

Email us at youth@amnesty.ca and we will ensure you get these new tools and resources as soon as they are available.





AMNESTY'S 2019 AGM: A WEEKEND FULL OF INSPIRATION AND LEARNING

Amnesty members at the AGM in Toronto called for justice for the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation in northern Ontario. In the 1960s, a pulp and paper mill dumped tons of mercury into the rivers upon which the First Nation depend, causing widespread, debilitating health problems.

FROM MAY 31 to June 2, Amnesty International supporters from across Canada gathered in Toronto for Amnesty's 2019 Annual General Meeting. The weekend was filled with opportunities for networking, capacity building, and furthering our understanding of human rights challenges in our world today.

Our opening keynote speaker, Hadiya Roderique (@hadiyaroderique), spoke about addressing biases in workplace hires, how to be an effective ally, and the importance of embracing the discomfort of discussions about race.

Amnesty's ongoing work on prisoners of conscience was highlighted during our Friday night panel discussion

where Maryam Malekpour, Antonella Mega, and Shaparak Shajarizadeh captivated us with their determination and resilience in their struggles to free loved ones unjustly jailed in Iran (#FreeSaeed #FreeMahmoudBeheshti #FreeNasrin).

The Saturday activism and campaigning workshops covered a wide range of topics including: making human rights an election issue, environmental racism and extractive industries, shifting the narrative on refugee rights, and ending sterilization without consent in Canada.

Members also discussed and provided input into the issues that will be brought forth at this year's Global Assembly of Sections from across the movement: developing a policy on military occupation, our vision on migration, human rights research, and internal measures to mitigate global warming.

We welcomed Helen Knott of Prophet River First Nation in northern British Columbia and Judy da Silva from Grassy Narrows First Nation in northern Ontario. Helen and Judy shared their personal stories and shed light on the human rights abuses their communities continue to face in Canada. Helen is a powerful voice in opposition to the Site C dam, and, as an activist and grandmother, Judy fights for justice for the people of Grassy Narrows who have been impacted by mercury pollution (freegrassy.net).

For more information on any of the cases you see here or learned about at the AGM, please visit [amnesty.ca](https://www.amnesty.ca).

2019 AGM BY THE NUMBERS

- 29 people planned the AGM and Human Rights College.
- 297 people attended the AGM
- 13 workshops, panels, and sessions
- 16 candidates ran in the election
- 5 new Board members were elected, with one returning member
- 212 members voted in the online election
- That translates to 22.6% voter turnout



Helen Knott of Prophet River First Nation in British Columbia was one of the guest speakers at the AGM. Helen campaigns against the proposed Site C Dam which will flood the Peace River Valley in northern BC.



Lawyer and writer Hadiya Roderique was the AGM's opening keynote speaker. She spoke to Amnesty members about biases in workplace hires and the importance of embracing the discomfort of discussions about race.

MEET AMNESTY CANADA'S BOARD

A PHENOMENAL slate of candidates put their names forward to sit on the Board this year, including 14 individuals running for four Director positions.

As a result of the online election, five new members joined the Board of Directors: Tara Vicckies, Abigail Greenidge, Mohamed Huque, Sarah Koch-Schulte, and Mante Molepo. Thank you to all of the candidates who stood for election this year. We look forward to having our new Board members bring their skills and experience to our governance work in the coming years.

AMNESTY CANADA'S BOARD FOR 2019–20

President: Lana Verran

Vice President: Gary Ockenden

Chair: Lee Seymour

Treasurer: Tara Vicckies

Directors: Sarah Damberger, Abigail Greenidge, Mohamed Huque, Sarah Koch-Schulte, Mante Molepo, Patrick Newton Bondo

We would also like to extend special thanks to outgoing Board members Athavarn Srikantharajah, Bill Rafoss, Sarah Morales, and Raheel Zaman. We truly appreciate the time, knowledge, and perspectives you've brought to the Board during your terms.

Please send any questions or feedback you have about the AGM, elections, or governance matters to the Board at board@amnesty.ca



HELP RAISE MONEY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Looking for a new way to get involved with Amnesty International?

How about fundraising for human rights!

By coupling your creativity with your passion for human rights, you can get involved in raising money for Amnesty's vital work around the world.

You can do anything from simply creating a donation page in lieu of gifts for your birthday to holding a benefit concert in your

community! Whatever your interests, there are endless opportunities. You can help save lives, stop torture, and make a difference for justice and human rights by supporting Amnesty International today.

Find out much more at amnesty.ca/fundraise-for-amnesty



2020 GIFT CATALOGUE



GREETING CARDS

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T-SHIRT

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WALL CALENDAR

\$16 each

LARGE CANVAS TOTE BAG

\$22 each

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NATIONAL INQUIRY: CALLS FOR JUSTICE ISSUED TO ALL PEOPLE IN CANADA

ON JUNE 3, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its final report.

In response, Amnesty International called on all governments in Canada to move beyond the current piecemeal approach to ending the violence that has failed First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, two-spirit people, families, and communities. It's time for a comprehensive response in keeping with the scope and scale of this human rights crisis.

The Inquiry issued eight Calls for Justice to all people in Canada. Please read them below. Share them with your family, friends, colleagues, and fellow activists. Respectfully engage in difficult discussions about how the structures and institutions of Canadian society with which we engage, and from which many of us benefit, put Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people in harm's way or deny them justice.

THE CALLS FOR JUSTICE:

- › Denounce and speak out against violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual] people.
- › Decolonize by learning the true history of Canada and Indigenous history in your local area. Learn about and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' history, cultures, pride, and diversity, acknowledging the land you live on and its importance to local Indigenous communities, both historically and today.
- › Develop knowledge and read the Final Report. Listen to the truths shared and acknowledge the burden of these human and Indigenous rights violations, and how they impact Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people today.

A 2009 vigil honouring the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit persons. The National Inquiry was preceded by many years of activism calling for government action to end the violence.

- › Using what you have learned and some of the resources suggested, become a strong ally. Being a strong ally involves more than just tolerance; it means actively working to break down barriers and to support others in every relationship and encounter in which you participate.
- › Confront and speak out against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, and transphobia, and teach or encourage others to do the same, wherever it occurs: in your home, in your workplace, or in social settings.
- › Protect, support, and promote the safety of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people by acknowledging and respecting the value of every person and every community, as well as the right of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to generate their own, self-determined solutions.
- › Create time and space for relationships based on respect as human beings, supporting and embracing differences with kindness, love, and respect. Learn about Indigenous principles of relationship specific to those Nations or communities in your local area and work, and put them into practice in all of your relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- › Help hold all governments accountable to act on the Calls for Justice, and to implement them according to the important principles we set out.

For more information visit amnesty.ca/stolensisters



USA

© Ali Jarrar/Amnesty International



Children at the US/Mexico border. Amnesty research teams have been at the border to interview asylum seekers and document the conduct of US border and immigration authorities.

USA:

STOP SEPARATING AND DETAINING FAMILIES

OVER THE PAST weeks and months, the reports of serious human rights violations in US detention facilities—particularly those which affect children—have grabbed headlines around the world.

There was much outrage after seven-year-old Jakelin Caal Maqin of Guatemala died in the custody of US immigration authorities in December 2018. Over the past year, it has been reported that at least seven children are known to have died in Customs and Border Protection custody.

More recently, the spotlight has been focused on the conditions of detention at facilities in Texas. Elora Mukherjee, a lawyer and professor, said the following of the Clint Facility in an interview with *The Atlantic* magazine's Lizzie O'Leary:

"An overwhelming number of children who I interviewed had not had an opportunity for a stable shower or bath since crossing the border [days or weeks earlier]...Nearly every child I spoke with said that they were hungry because they're being given insufficient food...The same food is served every single day, and none of the children receive any fruit and vegetables or any milk."

Another law professor, Warren Binford, who visited the same facility told *The New Yorker's* Isaac Chotiner: "[T]he children told us that nobody's taking care of them, so that basically the older children are trying to take care of the younger children...And then the littlest kids are expected to be taken care of by the older kids, but then some of the oldest children lose interest in it,

and little children get handed off to other children. And sometimes we hear about the littlest children being alone by themselves on the floor."

IS THE US SAFE FOR REFUGEE PROTECTION CLAIMANTS?

The treatment of people claiming refugee protection in the US is a serious human rights concern in its own right, but for Canada it is also relevant in the context of the Safe Third Country Agreement, under which refugee claimants are required to request refugee protection in the first country they arrive in (subject to some exceptions).

The US is not safe for many claimants, and conditions like those described above are one of the most important reasons that Canada can no longer rely on the American system to provide adequate protection. Despite some Canadian politicians insisting that the US is safe for refugee protection claimants, the record shows that this fiction can no longer be maintained.

TAKE ACTION

- Call on the USA to restore the right to seek protection at the border at [amnesty.ca/protection-at-border](https://www.amnesty.ca/protection-at-border)
- Demand that the USA stop separating asylum seeking parents and children at [amnesty.ca/stop-family-separation](https://www.amnesty.ca/stop-family-separation)
- Read Amnesty's reports on the arbitrary detention and ill treatment of asylum seekers in the USA at [amnesty.ca/homestead-report](https://www.amnesty.ca/homestead-report) and [amnesty.ca/usa-detention](https://www.amnesty.ca/usa-detention)



MEXICO:

CANADIANS SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH MOTHERS OF THE DISAPPEARED

Amnesty members' activism is deeply appreciated by families campaigning for justice in Mexico.

The thousands of cards delivered to Amnesty International's office—from communities big and small across Canada—were eye-catching and eloquent. Each card bore a personal message to Mexican President López Obrador in support of Mexico's movement of mothers of the disappeared.

A student in Alberta wrote: "I'm deeply concerned about the absolute crisis of disappearances in Mexico, now numbering over 40,000 people."

Another student in Ontario drew giant letters that spelled out the words "Donde Están? Where Are They?"

"I admire the courage and strength of the mothers who so desperately want the truth, justice and return of their lost loved ones," wrote a grandmother in Vancouver, adding: "I, like so many others, want this as well."

Retired senator Lois Wilson was crystal clear: "In Canada, we are very much aware of the huge Mother's Day march in Mexico and mindful of the sorrow and determination that propels these mothers to such a public witness. I ask that you urgently provide the National Search Commission and specialized prosecutors offices with resources needed to undertake their search work."

On June 13, these cards and others were delivered and read out to Mexico's new Ambassador in Canada, Juan José Gómez Camacho. Together with petition signatures collected by both the English-speaking and francophone branches of Amnesty Canada, we handed over more than 23,000 messages and handwritten cards for delivery to Mexico's President López Obrador.

Students at SATEC W.A. Porter Collegiate Institute in Toronto were some of the thousands of activists across Canada who wrote solidarity messages for mothers of the disappeared in Mexico.

The activism of Amnesty members in Canada is deeply appreciated by the mothers of the disappeared.

"We need people like you who offer their solidarity," Maricela Orozco Montalvo told us. Her 19-year-old son Gerson was abducted and her younger son Alan was killed seeking to find his brother. "We need the state to investigate," Maricela said. "The worst of all is that we face being killed for going out to search for our missing loved ones. It is so important that the Mexican government knows we are not alone."



"The worst of all is that we face being killed for going out to search for our missing loved ones."

— Maricela Orozco Montalvo

It's a message that other courageous leaders of Mexico's Movement for Our Disappeared echo as they continue their efforts to push authorities to find the missing and stop the crisis of disappearances.

"Thank you most of all for your words of faith and hope," wrote Grace Fernández, whose brother Dan Jeremeel disappeared in December 2008. "Your support helps us to continue our struggle."



A Climate Strike protest in Bangkok, Thailand, in May. Students around the world have been protesting against a lack of action on climate change. A global strike is planned for September 20.

STRIKE FOR THE CLIMATE: AMNESTY SUPPORTS GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION ON SEPTEMBER 20

CLIMATE CHANGE presents one of the most urgent and pervasive threats to our rights. Climate change impacts our right to life, health, food, water, housing and more. Millions of people are already suffering from the catastrophic effects of extreme disasters exacerbated by climate change. And the effects of climate change will continue to grow and worsen over time, creating ruin for current and future generations.

Courageous young people around the world are taking their future into their own hands by challenging us all to confront the realities of the climate crisis (see page 2). On Friday September 20, ahead of the United Nations Climate Action Summit, youth worldwide will be striking for the climate—and they encourage adults to join them!

Amnesty International stands in solidarity with the determined youth who are organizing and taking part in the climate strikes. We support the call for all youth and adults who are able to join the climate strike and show solidarity.

TAKE ACTION

- On Friday September 20, join a climate strike in your community.
- Visit [amnesty.ca/climate](https://www.amnesty.ca/climate) for more information about human rights and climate change and the global climate strike.



Amnesty supporters with solidarity messages to the communities of Quesnel Lake, BC.

MOUNT POLLEY DISASTER: AMNESTY SUPPORTERS SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

IN EARLY AUGUST, the Concerned Citizens of Quesnel Lake, British Columbia, hosted a gathering at Mitchell Bay on Quesnel Lake to celebrate the resilience of people and nature harmed by the 2014 Mount Polley mine disaster.

Amnesty's Business and Human Rights Campaigner, Tara Scurr, led a delegation of Amnesty staff and volunteers to Mitchell Bay to deliver hundreds of solidarity messages written by Amnesty supporters to residents of Quesnel Lake and downstream communities.

Our message to the people of these communities was clear: five years after the Mount Polley disaster, you are not forgotten. Millions of BC's wild salmon swim through Quesnel Lake to spawn in creeks and rivers throughout the region, and the Mount Polley disaster happened as the salmon were returning. Indigenous peoples and settler communities did not fish that year due to fears of toxic mine-waste contamination. Five years on, people are still worried about the potential health impacts of eating fish from the area. Two United Nations bodies have called for those responsible to be held to account.

The Amnesty delegation followed the route taken by returning salmon from the Pacific Ocean up through the interior of BC—a magical journey made richer knowing that at its end, we'd be sharing so many wonderful expressions of solidarity from Amnesty activists.

TAKE ACTION

Please visit [amnesty.ca/mountpolley](https://www.amnesty.ca/mountpolley) for photos, and to watch a video of mine waste being discharged into Quesnel Lake.



© Paul Thompson/Amnesty International

BILL TO IMPLEMENT UNDRIP STALLS IN SENATE

Campaigners remain determined to uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples

2019 federal election: All parties must now commit to implementing UNDRIP

“There are and always have been obvious flaws in a governing system that is designed to maintain a status quo and deny rights to people who power rejects,” says Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash, author of Bill C-262, a private member’s bill to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). “The process of bringing C-262 along the legislative path has highlighted this for me... It will take structural and institutional change in order to see justice on stolen lands. Let us rise with more energy. Let us stand with a greater determination.”

In June, Canada came within a hair’s breadth of adopting Indigenous rights legislation that would have set a powerful example for the world. Bill C-262 was passed by the House of Commons last year and would have passed the Senate except for stalling tactics used by a small group of Conservative Senators.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples “the framework for reconciliation in Canada”. Bill C-262 set out to fulfill the promise of reconciliation by requiring future governments to work with Indigenous peoples to develop a concrete implementation strategy—including law reform—and to report publicly on the progress being made.

Despite the troubling and disappointing setback of the Senate filibuster, a lot was accomplished. Even while Bill C-262 was being stalled in the Senate, all parties in the House of Commons joined in a unanimous motion supporting C-262 as “critical legislation” to be passed into law. This strong show of support is something we intend to build on.

As Canada’s federal election approaches, Amnesty International is calling on all parties to commit to a legislative framework for implementing the UN Declaration consistent with the principles of collaboration, accountability and law reform set out in C-262.

Amnesty activists demonstrating for Indigenous people’s rights. Despite recent setbacks in Canada’s Senate, First Nations peoples and allies are determined to ensure that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be implemented in Canada.

TAKE ACTION

Actions opportunities on this critically important issue will be part of Amnesty International’s 2019 federal election strategy. Please visit amnesty.ca this fall to take action.



© Nelly Almeida/Amnesty International

Grassy Narrows activist Judy DaSilva (left) at Amnesty AGM in Toronto with fellow activist Helen Knott from Prophet River First Nation.

JUDY DA SILVA INSPIRES MEMBERS AT AMNESTY’S 2019 AGM

“**THIS IS NOT** just about our children. It’s about your children, your grandchildren,” Judy DaSilva, a community activist of the Grassy Narrows First Nation in northern Ontario, told members gathered at Amnesty’s 2019 Annual General Meeting in Toronto in May.

The people of Grassy Narrows have been living with mercury contamination—and government inaction—for 50 years. However, as Judy told Amnesty members, the people are strong and resilient. And in fighting for justice, they are holding government accountable to environmental and human rights standards that affect us all.



© Santiago Comejo/Amazon Watch

ECUADOR: SPEAK UP AND HELP DEFEND SALOMÉ

Kichwa Indigenous community leader Salomé Aranda has courageously spoken out to denounce the environmental impacts of irresponsible oil operations in the Amazon, as well as sexual violence against Indigenous women that is linked to the arrival of oil companies. In retaliation, Salomé and her family have been threatened and attacked. They remain in grave danger.

They are not alone. Other women leaders of a collective called Amazonian Women have also been attacked and threatened with death. They risk their lives to protect the world's largest rainforest and the Indigenous people who depend on it for their survival.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to Ecuador's Attorney General:

- Call on her to carry out exhaustive, impartial investigations to identify and bring to justice all those behind the threats and attacks on Salomé Aranda, Patricia Gualinga, Nema Grefa and Margoth Escobar of the Amazonian Women collective;
- Call on her to ensure the provision of effective protection measures for these women human rights defenders, in accordance with their wishes.

WRITE TO:

Attorney General Diana Salazar
Fiscalia General del Estado
Av. Patria y 12 de Octubre Edificio Patria
170143, Quito
Ecuador

SALUTATION: Dear Attorney General Salazar

EMAIL: salazard@fiscalia.gob.ec

TWITTER: @FiscaliaEcuador

SEND A COPY TO:

His Excellency Juan Diego Stacey Moreno
Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador
99 Bank St, Suite 230
Ottawa, ON K1P 6B9

JOIN THE URGENT ACTION NETWORK

When an individual is in immediate danger of a human rights violation, Amnesty International mobilizes a dedicated group of letter-writers—the Urgent Action Network—to take action quickly to protect them. To join the network and receive regular Urgent Actions, send an e-mail to urgentaction@amnesty.ca with “I want to join” in the subject line.

CHINA: HELP END THE SURVEILLANCE OF JIANG TIANYONG



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Jiang Tianyong is a well-known human rights lawyer, whose activism resulted in him being disbarred in 2009. He continued his work as a human rights defender, despite suffering ongoing harassment, detention and physical beatings.

Jiang Tianyong was found guilty of “inciting subversion of state power” in November 2017. He was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. In prison, Jiang’s health deteriorated rapidly. He said he was force-fed unknown medication twice a day, and his father reported seeing his hands and feet cuffed to an iron chair.

According to his wife, Jin Bianling, Jiang remains under heavy surveillance, despite his release from prison in February 2019. Everywhere he goes, he is closely followed by a group of unidentified people. Since his release, Jiang Tianyong has needed a medical check-up. However, he has been unable to schedule an appointment out of concern that the presence of unidentified people will influence the medical care he receives.

TAKE ACTION

Write to the Chinese authorities:

- › Call on them to stop the surveillance and restrictions of freedom of movement on Jiang Tianyong and his family;
- › Urge them to ensure that Jiang Tianyong has unrestricted access to medical care.

WRITE TO:

Director of Luoshan County Public Security Bureau
Zhou Conggui
Xingzheng Dadao 16
Luoshan Xian, Xinyang Shi
Henan Sheng, China

SALUTATION: Dear Director

EMAIL: luoshangov@163.com

SEND A COPY TO:

Ms. Mingjian Chen
Minister-Counsellor and Chargé d'affaires, a.i.
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
515 St. Patrick St
Ottawa, ON K1N 5H3

RUSSIA: CALL FOR EMIR-USEIN KUKU'S FREEDOM



© Meriem Kuku

Emir-Usein Kuku is a human rights defender and a member of the Crimean Tatar Indigenous minority. Crimea, in the south of Ukraine, was annexed by the Russian Federation in March 2014.

As a member of the Crimean Human Rights Contact Group since October 2014, Emir-Usein has been peacefully opposing

the new regime and has been actively involved in the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations that swept the peninsula since the beginning of the occupation. His work has focused mainly on the enforced disappearance of activists and offering legal support for Crimean Tatars who face prosecution.

In February 2016 he was arrested and charged with “membership of a terrorist organization”. The charges relate to an unfounded accusation of him being a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamist movement that is banned as “extremist” in Russia but is not illegal in Ukraine. He is a prisoner of conscience, held in pretrial detention since February 2016, being persecuted solely for his legitimate human rights activities.

TAKE ACTION

Please write to the prosecutor general of the Russian Federation:

- › Call on him to ensure that Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants are immediately and unconditionally released, and all criminal charges against them dropped.

WRITE TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP-3
Russian Federation

SALUTATION: Dear Prosecutor General

SEND A COPY TO:

His Excellency Alexander Darchiev
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte St
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5

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FOR
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Go to writeathon.ca to sign up, email us at writeathon@amnesty.ca, or phone us at **1-800-266-3789** to register your event, or to find out more about how to get involved.

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