

Stop Harper's war on indigenous communities

To all our relations,
The latest in a series of recent attacks on Indigenous peoples' rights and sovereignty in Canada is being prepared right now by the Federal Conservative government. Bill C-10 – formally called the Tackling Contraband Tobacco Act – will criminalize the Native tobacco trade and destroy one of the few remaining economic infrastructures in indigenous communities that allows many people to remain in their ancestral territories and communities.

Bill C-10 will criminalize the possession for the purpose of sale of "unstamped" (meaning unpaid Canadian duties) tobacco. It will invoke mandatory minimum sentencing for those found with 10,000 cigarettes or more than 10 kilograms of loose leaf to-

bacco. It will require First Nations, local, and provincial police to criminally charge those in violation of the act, which will dramatically escalate already tense relationships between Indigenous peoples and police forces. It will allow police to draw up massively expanded search warrants and seize all assets deemed to be connected to tobacco "crime", including peoples' homes, vehicles and more. Perhaps the most troubling fact of all is that Bill C-10 will create a militarized RCMP Anti-Tobacco force to be used against Indigenous communities, putting far more indigenous people at risk from lethal police violence.

Bill C-10 will impact communities, families and workers. By attacking the First Nation tobacco trade, many people

will lose their livelihoods, contributing to further destitution and dislocation. Such effects will hurt Indigenous families, especially women, forcing many out of decent jobs, out of their communities, and into the streets of Canadian cities where the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women is already at epidemic proportions. Such outcomes are unconscionable. On top of these outcomes, this new law violates principles of international, domestic, and treaty law. As sovereign nations, First Nations assert their rights to economic self-determination and deny Canada the right to tax their economies, making the law amount to illegal economic sanctions. The Constitution of Canada calls for respecting Aboriginal rights, which many see

the sale of tobacco as including. As a violation of the Two Row Wampum and its principles of non-interference in the affairs of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), the law seems destined to cause conflict.

Bill C-10 does not emerge out of nowhere. Rather, it is tactical move on the part of the Canadian government in their larger strategic framework to contain, control, and ultimately assimilate Indigenous peoples. Mass incarceration of Indigenous peoples, the persistent murder and disappearance of Indigenous women, the surveillance of Indigenous activists, and the pressure by all levels of the Canadian state to accelerate land surrenders and secure "in all finality" the dispossession of Indigenous ancestral territories are all

aspects of ongoing colonization. The passage and implementation of Bill C-10 will not only clearly aggravate all these other expressions of colonialism; it will deal a deadly blow in this multi-pronged set of attacks on Indigenous peoples that some analysts have described as a comprehensive "termination plan".

The introduction of Bill C-10 a year after the emergence of Idle No More shows that the Conservative government, building on decades and centuries of colonial policies, has no intention but to continue, intensify and accelerate colonial violence and dispossession in Canada. This has been described in some communities as a "declaration of war".

Please join us in saying NO TO BILL C-10! Our support of indigenous

communities and their inalienable rights to self-determination depend on it.
WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Email coalitionvs-billc10@gmail.com and add your organization or business name to a list of endorsers of this statement and participate in the meetings and activities of the Coalition Against Bill C-10.

- Sign the petition at <http://killbillc10.com> and have all your relations do the same.

- Like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @ KillBillC10.

- Stay tuned for upcoming events and actions concerning Bill C-10.

*In solidarity,
The Coalition Against Bill C-10.*