



## **THE DOCUMENTARY ORGANIZATION OF CANADA CONDEMNS SILENCING OF DOCUMENTARIAN, JOURNALIST AND WET’SUWET’EN LAND DEFENDERS, DEMANDS UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE**

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the RCMP arrested fifteen land defenders, allies and legal observers in unceded Wet’suwet’en territory in northern British Columbia including documentary filmmaker Michael Toledano and journalist Amber Bracken, both of whom were clearly identified as journalists. Toledano has spent the past three years filming Wet’suwet’en land defenders for his documentary *Yintah*.

The violent raid ended a 56-day Indigenous reoccupation of the Coastal GasLink drilling site. The cabin housing Toledano, Bracken and Wet’suwet’en land defenders has been burned to the ground by cleaning crews monitored by the RCMP.

“What we have here is a dangerous blackout of police action against Indigenous resistance,” says Documentary Organization of Canada Executive Director Sarah Spring. “As recently as July 2021, the BC Supreme Court ruled that the police will not interfere with journalistic work. Documentarians provide in-depth, long form independent content that has proven time and again to be an incredibly powerful form of information-sharing and storytelling in the public interest.”

The Documentary Organization of Canada strongly condemns the illegal arrest of documentarians and journalists exercising their fundamental freedom of the press and any prohibitions on their ability to work and report their stories. DOC condemns the arrest and removal of Wet’suwet’en land defenders who are upholding Wet’suwet’en law on unceded land, the removal of Wet’suwet’en from their land and the destruction of their property. DOC calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arrested, for all charges to be dropped and for the release and return of Michael Toledano’s footage and camera equipment.

“Documentary filmmakers must be able to work without fear of being arrested or intimidated,” says Spring. “Forcibly preventing a documentarian or journalist from covering a story violates their fundamental freedoms, and leads to the dangerous precedent of a story being silenced.”

### **About DOC**

The Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) is the collective voice of Canada’s independent documentary creators. DOC began in 1983 as the Canadian Independent Film Caucus (CIFC) to represent the interests of Canada’s growing community of indie doc filmmakers. Today DOC has over 750 members across six chapters from coast to coast. DOC’s National office leads on research and advocacy work that strengthens the ecosystem for documentary production while DOC chapters provide community support, professional development and networking opportunities. Every day, DOC works to create conditions that will ensure that documentaries - and their creators - thrive.