

April 10, 2015

Unifor Local Union Presidents and Recording Secretaries

National Day of Mourning April 28th, 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This is our 31st year of observing April 28th as the National Day of Mourning to remember and honor those workers who have died or who have been injured on the job.

For more than three decades, we have gathered to direct the attention of our governments and employers to a common agenda focused on preventative measures that will reduce the suffering of workers and their families.

Unfortunately, the suffering continues. In 2013, the last year statistics were released from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, more than 900 workers died on the job. If we take into account the number of deaths from occupational disease, not usually part of workers' compensation statistics, then the death toll numbers in the hundreds of thousands.

Our members face danger every day on the job. Toxic chemicals, such as asbestos, workplace violence and working alone, traffic accidents, stress, infectious disease exposures, noise, and crippling musculoskeletal injuries are just some of the hazards Unifor members face to keep our country running.

There continues to be a serious lack of commitment on behalf of governments at the provincial and particularly at the federal level to enforce the health and safety protections that we have fought for such as the right to refuse unsafe work.

Governments everywhere must live up to their obligations to uphold and enforce workplace laws that protect workers' safety.

The prevention of injuries, fatalities and occupational diseases need to be top priorities in every workplace. Workers, unions and organizations need to ensure that health and safety remains an active discussion and activity in all workplaces. We do this by participating in workplace health and safety committees and activities, by enforcing our rights under health and safety legislation, and by calling for new health and safety legislation to protect workers from today's hazards.

Let us collectively ensure that this year's Day of Mourning observances send a strong message to all governments of their obligation and responsibility to strongly enforce health and safety laws and regulations. We need to tell our elected politicians we want action and we intend to support only those who will give us this commitment.

Safe work is a right not a privilege.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Dias". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jerry Dias
National President

lh:cope343

cc: Peter Kennedy, Michel Ouimet, Assistants, NEB, National Reps, Coordinators