

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 21, 2018

Too many Indigenous people and black Canadians have been denied justice in the last year alone, and this is a historical problem that is rooted in racism.

Colten Boushie, Tina Fontaine, Abdoul Abdi, Ebrahim Toure, and Mavis Korkor Lamyoh. These are the names of just a few of the Indigenous and people of color who have become victims and survivors of Canada's justice system this last year.

Unifor states the names of these individuals to recognize and give voice to the daily lived experiences of racism. Our union joins a growing number of people in remembering these stories and will honour their experience by demanding justice in what is Canada's unequal criminal justice system.

The union also rejects the criminalization of immigration, the use of deportation as a punishment, and of a border system which remains closed to those who need sanctuary and safety more than anyone. And, most importantly, we join others in recognizing that the struggles of Indigenous and people of color are bound up with everyone's and that only solidarity creates a way forward for us all.

Every trade unionist must do more, and unite in issuing a demand that governments dramatically change Canada's criminal justice system. It's simply not good enough to claim that Indigenous workers and children, and workers of colour, are valued when injustice and outright violence is allowed to be perpetuated against them.

Today and on March 21, 2018, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Unifor recalls and commits to act because unless we are all free, none of us are free.

Unifor encourages all members to work with local and regional Aboriginal and workers of colour committees to support and amplify their calls for justice and to challenge racism and colonialism wherever it takes root.

The stories behind the names:

- Colten Boushie, a young Cree man from Saskatchewan was killed without consequence by a farmer for merely stepping foot on his property.

- Tina Fontaine, 15 years old, and one of this country's deplorably long string of murdered and missing Indigenous women, also died without consequence despite overwhelming evidence about the identity of her killer.
- Abdoul Abdi, a 24 year old former child refugee from Somalia, is at risk of being deported from Canada because the government institution whose care he was in failed to process his citizenship when he was a child.
- Ebrahim Toure, from Gambia, has been in immigration detention for five years now simply because he has no documentation to prove his citizenship.
- Mavis Korkor Lamyoh from Ghana died of hypothermia trying to reach Canada by foot from the U.S. because of an unjust immigration policy which, intentionally or not, encourages irregular and unsafe ways of reaching the country.

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