

Statement



Emancipation Day Statement

On this day in 1834, the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 took effect, which laid a pathway to freeing enslaved people in British colonies across the globe and here in Canada.

Today many Black, Indigenous, and workers of colour are still being denied full and safe participation in many institutions and organizations. Unions must be a part of removing any obstacles still in the way of Black, Indigenous and workers of colour and their many other intersections in workplaces, unions, and society.

Last year marked the first year the Canadian Government recognized August 1st as Emancipation Day. The recognition was in part a result of Unifor's 2020 letters to all the provinces and territories demanding for the day to be recognized as a first step for racial justice. We must never forget Canada's horrible history of slavery and its persisting consequences and injustices. We must learn from our history and uproot the legacy of racism that still impacts our communities.

Unifor will continue to bargain, advocate and support all Anti-Racism work to eradicate racism in Canada and globally. People of African descent must be recognized for their resilience and perseverance in overcoming adversity throughout history. All while contributing to the building of the nation. Today, we also acknowledge that Indigenous peoples were subjected to slavery in what is now Canada and that the legacy of colonization has had negative implications on generations of people of African descent and Indigenous peoples. Unifor demands that governments and organizations work with communities to right the wrongs from Canada's past.

Unifor strongly encourages locals to participate in their communities and share their pictures and pledges online. This day is an opportunity to reflect and stand up to racism and all intersecting forms of discrimination. Today and every day, Unifor pledges work to our commitment to Human Rights, Social Justice, economic justice and uphold the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples commitments.

"On Emancipation Day, I think about my ancestors and those who paved the way for me. We must do more than wear a t-shirt or say the right words. I pledge to advocate in every workplace across the country for racial justice and to remove barriers to suitable employment for communities that have been denied access to the good unionized jobs," said Christine Maclin, Unifor Human Rights Director.

Unifor will continue to work collaboratively with community organizations across the country to eradicate racism. The Union for Everyone will ask everyone to do the work daily for racial justice.

This year we are asking Unifor members to pledge their commitments to Racial justice by sharing your photos and thoughts on social media with the hashtag #Unifor4RacialJustice.