

Statement



April 24, 2023

National Day of Mourning, April 28, 2023

Each day we benefit from the labour of millions of workers who give large proportions of their lives to provide us with everything that makes up modern life, from providing power and fuel to making finished goods and moving and taking care of people. Sadly, every year, thousands suffer injury or illness because of their working conditions and horrifyingly, workers continue to die on the job or as a result of it.

Since our last Day of Mourning, we remember Unifor members:

Yani Ni, Local 252
Camil Pouliot, Local 299
Adam Love, Local 4268
Michael Daye, Local 506
Brad Poupard, Local 2009AP
Jean-Xavier Proulx, Local 299
Terry Roberts, FFAW-Unifor
Michael Gravelle, Local 6008
Paul Totten, Local 45

They are not forgotten.

“Mourn the Dead, Fight for the Living”

The slogan for the Day of Mourning reflects the need to remember those who have lost their lives but also contains a strong reminder of the need to press for improvements in health and safety in our workplaces, ensuring workers are protected from the workplace hazards that lead to preventable, needless death, serious injury or illness.

On April 28, too many Canadians can name a victim of a workplace fatality, disease or injury. The years may have passed but the work-related death statistics have not improved. Multiple fatality incidents every year across the country still shock us. On average, three Canadians die every day from their work. As a society, we must do more to protect working people.

The lives of the families of those killed and injured in these and other workplace tragedies change immeasurably; they often feel let down by a justice system that takes far too long to establish exactly how their loved ones died, or in the case of those injured or ill, the circumstances that led to them to suffer life-changing injuries or illnesses.

Occupational health and safety laws across Canada require employers to take every precaution reasonable to safeguard workers. When this duty of care is not met, employers can be subject to compliance orders and prosecution. But when this breach amounts to a wanton or reckless disregard for the lives and safety of workers resulting in death or bodily harm, justice demands more. The Canadian labour movement lobbied for 12 years to amend the Criminal Code which is embodied in [Bill C-45, also known as the 'Westray Law'](#), which was enacted in 2004.

Although there is a need for new or improved health and safety regulations in a number of areas, even more urgently, **Unifor demands that all Canadian regulators enforce existing laws vigorously and effectively, including the Criminal Code Amendments.**

On April 28, please take time to reflect on the service rendered to each of us by thousands of unseen workers who make up the workforce in our communities and who support the lives we lead. This is also an important time to revisit your workplace's health and safety measures and review the [resources available through your union](#).

Let us collectively ensure that this year's Day of Mourning observances send a strong message to all governments and law enforcement agencies. At every opportunity, we need to tell our elected politicians that we want action and we intend to support only those who will give us this commitment.

Download Unifor's Day of Mourning poster and social media sharables here. Post messages on social media, tag your representatives, and tell them we demand strong protection for workers.

We ask all Unifor Locals to share stories and photos of activities and events related to participation in this year's Day of Mourning activities at healthandsafety@unifor.org.

Download the Day of Mourning [poster here](#).

Download the Day of Mourning [graphic here](#).