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An Open Letter to All USW Local Unions, Activists and Members:

As many of you know by now, Unifor's leadership made the decision to unilaterally leave the Canadian Labour Congress last Wednesday January 17. This is, of course, a very disappointing decision.

What's more disappointing is that Unifor attempts to justify this decision by attacking International Unions. But Unifor's excuse for quitting Canada's national labour organization must be understood for what it is – a deeply cynical attempt to justify its intent to raid at least one CLC affiliate, and possibly more.

Within hours of its sudden departure announcement, Unifor began its planned raid against Unite Here Local 75, a union representing hotel and hospitality workers in Toronto.

This blatant interference in the affairs of a CLC affiliated union follows upon Unifor's attempt last year to raid the members of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 in Toronto who work for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC).

This decision by some in Unifor's leadership to quit the CLC means that Unifor has voluntarily given up all rights under the CLC constitution. The CLC's constitution, a governing document to which Unifor previously pledged full support, makes it crystal clear: Unifor members no longer have the right to participate in the CLC, provincial federations of labour or labour councils. Despite this, Unifor is arguing that it should be permitted to remain active in labour councils and federations

As USW directors, we want to be very clear. The Unifor leaders who made this unilateral decision cannot now evade the results of that decision. Therefore, while Unifor is raiding our brothers and sisters in other unions, there is no place for Unifor in the house of labour. The USW will stand with and support CLC-affiliated unions that are under attack, just as we would expect them to support us if Unifor turned on USW members, anywhere in this country.

Unifor's decision to pit union against union in an attempt to increase its membership is a breach of the central commitment that each CLC affiliate makes in solidarity with the rest of the labour movement. A union cannot in good faith be a committed member of the labour movement if it ignores that movement's central rules when it suits its purposes - and that is what Unifor is doing.

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As leaders of our Union in English Canada, we also recognize that the FTQ in Quebec has its own constitution and the autonomy to address this challenge in its own way.

Unifor's decision has the potential to do fundamental damage to our movement. We know that we are stronger as a movement when we are united, when we work together to protect and defend the rights of our members and the rights of all workers in Canada. Unifor's decision to raid another affiliate and attack international unions serves only to undermine this solidarity in the labour movement.

How this plays out will become clearer in the coming days and weeks. As directors of our Union we will do everything in our power to try and build the movement and restore its unity and purpose.

In solidarity,



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