

April 2021

Sisters and Brothers,

It may be hard to believe, but 2021 is the second year that Day of Mourning activities on April 28th will once again be recognized in the midst of the global pandemic that continues unabated across Canada.

Once again, and in the interest of maintaining health and safety precautions, we are urging activists to hold April 28th for remembrance and dedication to the cause of stopping the killing at work. Too many Canadians continue to be injured and to die for the sake of a paycheque. We still hope that we can all prepare for the Day of Mourning in our respective communities, while practicing physical distancing, the wearing of masks and only gathering outside if it can be done safely.

We include in our remembrances the workers who have died – in fact, all those who have died – because of the pandemic. Many were frontline workers and others worked in processing facilities where precautions and personal protective equipment were not used, allowing COVID-19 to spread. These are deliberate acts of negligence, as much as any explosion or faulty piece of equipment.

We must also recognize the toll that the pandemic is having on mental health, partly due to isolation generally, but also the effects of an economy and governments that were neither prepared nor up to the task of facing something that was in fact predicted as far back as 2003. There was an obvious lack of pandemic planning with unacceptable national shortages of personal protective equipment. Our own members voluntarily made face shields when none were being provided by government and employers.

The Day of Mourning only becomes more important every year, as we face the need for mandatory training standards and new challenges, such as paid sick days, a battle now being waged by our allies in the New Democratic Party. We need to address issues such as ensuring easier compensation for diseases such as COVID-19 as well as support for workers exercising their right to refuse unsafe work during pandemics. We also need to give thanks to our members, who continue to work in vital industries and provide the goods and services Canadians rely on – pandemic or no pandemic.

The challenges will always be faced head-on by our union and activists. We continue our campaign to Stop the Killing and Enforce the Law. Last year for the first time in the province of New Brunswick, criminal charges were laid against a Fredericton construction company in the death of a young worker. But there are too many cases that still need to be prosecuted under the Westray Law. We will never stop demanding accountability. Next year will mark thirty years since the tragedy that took the lives of 26 miners at the Westray mine. We once again recommit to never forgetting them and fighting to ensure such preventable incidents are never repeated.

Again, as last year, we encourage you to observe the Day of Mourning in whatever way you are able or is allowed by ever-changing rules around gatherings.

Regardless of how we are able to do so, April 28th remains the day we recommit to fighting for the living, every day.

In health, safety and solidarity,



Ken Neumann
National Director



Steve Hunt
District 3 Director



Dominic Lemieux
District 5 Director



Marty Warren
District 6 Director

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