

Statement



Unifor Statement on Human Rights Day

December 10, 2017

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 70 years later, the underlying values and principles remain not only universally relevant, but absolutely crucial to the ongoing struggle for social and economic justice and human dignity. Human rights are the rights that give meaning to the universal truth that every human being is of equal worth.

Despite this, challenges to the fundamental status of these rights persist across the globe, in nation-states, in times of war and in times of peace, in institutions and cities and rural areas, and in workplaces. International Human Rights Day is a reminder that inequity, intolerance, discrimination, exclusion, and hatred threaten us all. It is a reminder of our shared humanity and of the necessity of standing up not just for ourselves, but for those most in need. Wherever they are challenged, it is our responsibility to offer a collective response.

Unifor is committed to asserting, promoting and defending human rights. The union's social justice fund engages in this important work in Canada and across the globe. By providing humanitarian relief in times of crisis and by supporting organizations that are working to end discriminatory treatment, including that of Indigenous children, Unifor offers its solidarity to human rights defenders.

Recognizing that internal work is as important as work externally, Unifor has been engaged in the process of taking a hard look at itself. Conducting an equity audit was an initial step. Most recently, Unifor appointed an advisory panel to address the equity issues raised by the audit. Knowing that diversity is an organizational strength, the union is working hard to engage with and support the work being done by Unifor's equity committees.

On International Human Rights Day, Unifor is asking all local unions to play a part in the shared responsibility of building an equitable union. Adopt a local strategy to strengthen human rights committees. Encourage the participation of members of equity seeking groups as valued union leaders. Make room for difficult discussions. Above all, remember that those most at risk of having their human rights violated or those most in need of the power a union possesses.