

January 17, 2018

Sisters and Brothers,

Over the course of the past year many of you will be familiar with the very public position Unifor has taken with regard to U.S. based unions interfering in the autonomy of their Canadian locals.

This past month, for the second time in a year, a Canadian local union has been placed into trusteeship. Some of the democratically elected members of the leadership of UNITE HERE Local 75 in Toronto as well as the bulk of their local union staff have been terminated for disloyalty to their U.S. based union. Despite the overwhelming opposition to trusteeship by the membership, the U.S.-based union has been relentless in its efforts to take over the local.

Unifor has voiced our concern about this very issue for the past year. The fact is, Unifor takes a principled position with regard to the autonomy of Canadian local unions and the rights of workers to belong to a union of their choosing.

Article 4 of the Constitution of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) provides for a path for workers to change unions, but in reality, that process is not respected by many affiliates as they simply do not cooperate.

Additionally, the CLC Constitution under Article 26 has provisions to protect the autonomy of Canadian workers, but as we have now seen on two occasions, Unifor is in the minority when it comes to the importance of this provision. This simply cannot continue.

Given the above context I regret to inform you that on January 16, 2018, the Unifor National Executive Board has voted to cease affiliation to the Canadian Labour Congress.

Unifor will continue to affiliate, support and participate in the provincial Federations of Labour and local Labour Councils.

The CLC Constitution requires affiliates of the Congress to affiliate to all three levels of the Canadian labour movement. This is inconsistently applied as many unions affiliated to the CLC do not participate in Federations or Labour Councils. This has been a matter of contention for years among provincial and local central labour bodies. We see no reason why Unifor can not to continue to participate in Federations and Labour Councils.

Additionally, we have unions affiliated with the CLC who are not national organizations as required by the Constitution.

In light of the broad lack of enforcement of the CLC Constitution, Unifor takes the position that we have no intention of ceasing our involvement in Federations or Labour councils. There is effective work happening across the country at these levels of the movement and our issues lie with the CLC's ineffectiveness in enforcing the issues identified above.

We will strongly encourage all Unifor locals to continue to send per capita to Federations and Labour Councils.

Unifor does recognize the significance of this decision and it was not made lightly. Indeed it was made with much debate and soul-searching. Unifor was created to build a better, more democratic and inclusive labour movement. We remain steadfast in our commitment to doing so.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jerry Dias".

JERRY DIAS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

LP/CMD/wwcope343