



International
Transport Workers'
Federation



EUROPEAN TRANSPORT
WORKERS' FEDERATION



FILT CGIL
Federazione
Italiana
Lavoratori
Trasporti



FIT-CISL
FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA TRASPORTI



UILTRASPORTI

JOINT STATEMENT

NORTH AMERICAN DOCKERS RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT IN THEIR ONGOING FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

19 JUNE 2020

A week after ILA and ILWU dockers shut down ports on the east and west coasts of the United States in solidarity with George Floyd and countless other victims of police brutality and racial injustice; our international dockers family is standing with our sisters and brothers of the ILWU and ILWU Canada, as they once again put down their tools to add their industrial muscle to the struggle for racial equality and social justice.

The ILWU are being joined in protests of solidarity by dockers in Italy, represented by FILT-CGIL, FIT-CISL and Uiltrasporti – and supported by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). Once more, the demand is for an end to systematic and institutional racism, police brutality and economic inequality.

The rallies are being held on June 19th to coincide with Juneteenth, or Freedom Day, in the United States. The day commemorates an address on June 19, 1869, when Union general Gordon Granger read orders in Texas that declared all previously enslaved people in Texas to be freed. While the *Emancipation Proclamation* formally freed slaves more than two and a half years earlier, the reality was that enforcement of the proclamation was not universal across the United States.

Italian dockers from FILT-CGIL, FIT-CISL and Uiltrasporti, who will be participating in the rally, said in a joint statement of support that: "We stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the United States and Canada and call for an end to the racial injustice that we see in the United States and around the world. Unions have a long history of fighting for justice, and we will continue to stand together against all forms of hate, bigotry and injustice not just in ports but in every city and every region."

Willie Adams, ILWU International President and ITF Dockers' First Vice Chair, said: "The ILWU is protesting on June 19th, or Juneteenth, in the spirit of our Union's founders — including

some who gave their lives in the events of the 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike. We still live by their creed: 'an injury to one is an injury to all.'

"Juneteenth has long been recognised by the African-American community, but for many others it was unknown until now – as our nation, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, refocuses on ways to address ongoing, systematic racial justice. Today, thousands of dockers on the west coast and in Italy will stop work to show their commitment to the cause of racial equality and social justice," added Adams.

The stop work action is also being supported by unions on the other side of the world. Paddy Crumlin, Maritime Union of Australia National Secretary, who is also the ITF President and ITF Dockers Chair, said: "Racism is pervasive and therefore often dismissed or ignored. George Floyd's murder starkly illuminated a gut-wrenching abuse of institutional power, recorded in daylight, in the most casual of settings as witnesses gathered around pleading for Mr Floyd's life."

"His atrocious murder was the spark that has set the world on fire, highlighting racism as the burning question of humanity, and setting the issue of racism and discrimination - economically, politically and socially – to the fore as the movement for justice gains massive momentum. The ITF and MUA stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the United States, Canada and globally today, we will continue to fight for racial and social justice."

"Today, and every day, the ITF family says without equivocation: Black Lives Matter. Racial justice matters. Solidarity with our black sisters and brothers matters," added Crumlin.

ETF Dockers' Section chair Terje Samuelsen said: "We are proud to support our brothers and sisters of the ILWU in this fight for social and racial justice, and we stand with Italian dockers in this great show of solidarity. Once again – dockers from all over the world are raising a loud, united voice in defense of human rights and dignity for everyone, and we always will."

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About the ITF: The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is a democratic global union federation of nearly 700 transport workers trade unions representing around 20 million workers in 150 countries. The ITF works to improve the lives of transport workers globally, encouraging and organising international solidarity among its network of affiliates. The ITF represents the interests of transport workers' unions in bodies that take decisions affecting jobs, employment conditions and safety in the transport industry.