

# LABOUR COUNCIL'S STATEMENT ON WHITE SUPREMACY IN BUFFALO SHOOTING



May 19, 2022

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council is horrified and dismayed by another devastating and senseless racially-motivated act of hate. We are deeply enraged that an eighteen-year-old white supremacist drove into a Black neighbourhood to target Blacks, killing 10 people and injuring 3 others. Although the incident did not occur in Ontario or Canada, we know that the racist ideologies and the organizing of the alt-right and white supremacists extend across political borders.

The fact that the killer identifies as a fascist and a white nationalist, and drew inspiration from the mass shootings in El Paso, in Christchurch, and in Quebec City shows that the ideologies of hate are spread globally. The killer's manifesto referenced "white genocide" and the "great replacement" theories to explain his hatred and resentment towards racial minority groups.

"The Buffalo shooter's motive reflects a history where white supremacy is baked into our society, where structural and systemic racism shaped our systems, and now people feel emboldened to violently and specifically eliminate Blacks in their own communities," said Andria Babbington, President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council.

At a time when the world is still recovering from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the alt-right and online hate communities are capitalizing on fear and economic uncertainty to drive racial divisions between communities. Impressionable young people, feeling vulnerable and insecure from the pandemic, are seeking online communities to break out of social isolation, but instead are being systematically radicalized by these online (and in-person) hate groups.

"We in the labour movement have a responsibility to challenge racism and stop the spread of hate. To remain silent is to abandon our own community. We must engage *even more* in the difficult, necessary work of talking to our members to help them unlearn and dismantle racism. Those of us in leadership and positions of power have an obligation to do this work," Babbington said.

"We've done great work in recent months with the Community Solidarity Toronto coalition in building a progressive resistance movement against the alt-right organization of the Convoy occupation. But our work doesn't stop there. This suffering has to end. While we mourn the dead with the families of the victims, together we are going to fight like hell for the living to dismantle racism."

The Labour Council represents 220,000 working women and men in every sector of the economy in the Greater Toronto Area, and has a long history of challenging discrimination and bigotry. Racial Justice is a main pillar of the Labour Council's strategic plan. The Labour Council supports affiliates and their members to build more equitable and inclusive unions.

In addition to the Charter of Inclusive Workplaces and Communities, which has been adopted by the City of Toronto and others, the Labour Council promotes the ["Yes, It Matters!" campaign](#) to end systemic racism and create a just Canada for all. Visit [labourcouncil.ca/equity](http://labourcouncil.ca/equity) for more information.