

**UNITING** *for TOMORROW*



**S'UNIR** *pour DEMAIN*

**CONVENTION - CONGRÈS**

**MAY 1-5 MAI 2023**

**TORONTO, ONTARIO**

# Report on **International Solidarity Work**

Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes

**cupw • sttp**

# INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

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## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY SUPPORTS US ALL

### Workers Helping Workers

Strong and organized Unions aren't built overnight; they require investments. To strengthen the labour movement worldwide, countries with resources and expertise must help others build sustainable Union structures. Many countries are starting from scratch; Union structures are non-existent. International solidary projects help countries create their Unions and build a system and structure. To be truly independent, Unions should be funded through the dues collected from their members. Once a strong foundation is laid, these new Unions can begin to operate on their own.

The goal of CUPW's international solidarity work, through projects and delegations, is to build and maintain strong relationships with other postal Unions around the world, and to preserve strong unionized public post offices both at home and internationally.

### CUPW and the World

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has always been committed to international solidarity. We even brought this issue to the bargaining table. The International Postal Fund, under Appendix "R" of the collective agreement, was negotiated in 2000. This fund, paid for by Canada Post, helps the Union stay involved in and support the international labour movement, finances solidarity projects with postal Unions around the world, and much more, without the use of Union dues.

Through the International Postal Fund, CUPW has supported postal workers and their Unions in Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, French Africa, Palestine, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela to name a few. These projects include, among other things, training sessions, helping workers organize, and helping postal Unions participate in the broader labour movement.

Through the International Postal Fund, CUPW also benefits by learning and support for dealing with postal modernization, fighting for postal banking and expanded services through our international relationships with postal Unions in UNI Global.

CUPW also played an active role in activities and meetings organized by UNI Global Union:

- UNI Americas Post and Logistics: Jan Simpson, President;
- UNI World Women's Committee: Anny Lesage, Regional Union Representative, Metro-Montreal Region, member of UNI.

Though it changed our working methods, and was challenging for forming bonds, we did not let the pandemic stop this work. Even though mobility was restricted around the world, our international solidarity projects did not stop.

Many meetings continued online, but personal connection is critical to this kind of work, and we hope to rebuild momentum now that face-to-face meetings are possible again.

## **Solidarity at Home**

The Union is also committed to building solidarity here in Canada through concrete actions in conjunction with labour and civil society organizations, such as Common Frontiers and International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group and the CLC International committee. Over the years, we've provided meeting space, logistics support, and participated actively in meetings, working groups, and conferences in support of worker issues.

## **Common Frontiers**

CUPW has been a member of Common Frontiers for many years. This organization, which is financed by many Unions and other international solidarity organizations, is a working group that challenges economic integration in the Americas and proposes alternatives. Free trade is at the heart of its actions.

Not only do we support Common Frontiers financially, but also through logistical support and active participation in its activities. In recent years, the group's annual meetings have taken place at our National Office, in Ottawa. We also supported meetings held in Mexico and Canada to plan activities against the renewal of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). We also took part in the delegation to monitor elections in Venezuela in 2018.

Common Frontiers' annual meetings are also a unique opportunity to discuss our analysis of the situation in the Americas with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Its website also gives access to analyses that cannot be found in the traditional media.

## **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) International Advisory Committee**

The Canadian Labour Congress' Advisory Committee meets twice a year. Its main objective is to share views on international solidarity work, but also to discuss "hot" issues and, if necessary, make recommendations to the CLC. For example, after discussing the situation in the Colombia the Committee suggested to the CLC leadership that it organize a tour in Colombia.

## **Basis for our Commitment to International Solidarity**

By definition, a labor Union is an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests. As a Union we work for the individual rights of members at work, the collective rights of workers for the employers we face, and for the collective rights of workers the world over, which rely on the strength of international ties and institutions.

Solidarity, by definition, is the unity that produces or is based on unities of interests, objectives, and standards. It refers to the ties that bind workers together as one, no matter where they work or live.

Unions around the world are fighting for many of the same rights: safe working conditions, quality of life off the job, and of course, fair and just wages. Workers are more likely to gain rights and win when the labour movement sticks together, which is why solidarity is a foundation of the labour movement.

“The most important word in the language of the working class is solidarity,” said Harry Bridges, who founded – and led for the 40 years – the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in New York. Solidarity can’t be limited to one workplace, city, or country; to be successful, it must be applied everywhere, locally, nationally, and internationally.

## **International Solidarity Goals for the Future**

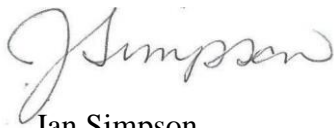
The ultimate goal of the Appendix “R” fund is to support postal workers around the world to organize, build collective strength, and gain better working conditions. The fund is replenished (per our collective agreement) to the extent that we use it, up to \$200,000 per year. That is, it’s on a use-it-or-lose-it basis.

We should empower more workers to build up postal Union power in their own workplaces. We want to add projects in more countries, which requires showing up to do groundwork: forming relationships of trust and goodwill with our postal worker counterparts everywhere and participating in international federations and global Union activism.

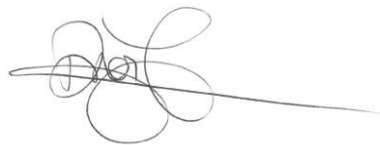
We could focus particularly on Latin America and French Africa, whether we have some inroads and connections, but there is much more we could do to support effectiveness of postal Unions. The resources and rights we have gained here should be shared with Unions who are in solidarity-building projects.

In a world where we are continually affected by global labour and supply chains, we have growing reasons to be concerned for working conditions and worker democracy the world over. Conditions of postal workers internationally matter to us because we care about our fellow human beings, and also because poor conditions in postal work anywhere make it harder to improve working conditions everywhere.

Solidarity is a two-way street, and we've seen how our support for workers abroad is reciprocated when we need support for our bargaining and campaigns. Support our Appendix "R" work, and if you're willing to help, ask how you can get involved!



Jan Simpson  
National President



Don Foreman  
National Union Representative

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Current Projects with International Postal Unions for 2022-2023**

#### **Colombia**

"STPC" initially was created as a grassroots Union in 2005 and at the end of 2008, after overcoming many obstacles; it became the Postal and Logistics Branch Industry Union, managing to remain active in the defense of the rights of its members to through the years with the important cooperation, support and solidarity of CUPW-STTP.

The project we support in Colombia builds capacity in the postal workers' Union there – Sindicato de Trabajadores Postales de Colombia-STPC. The project is to:

1. Carry out an Extraordinary Assembly to confirm the qualified membership for the Call for voting and elections in management positions.
2. Convoke the VII Ordinary General Assembly to elect the National Board of Directors and the Bogotá Regional Sub-directorate.
3. Carry out training workshops on Union Leadership and Right of Association.
4. Strengthen solidarity and fraternity within the organization, through integration mechanisms among its affiliates, with recreational and social activities.

#### **Venezuela**

On August 8, 2022, we celebrated three years of the creation of the Bolivarian National Union of Postal Workers of Venezuela (STTP), thanks to the support of our Comrades and friends from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, (CUPW-STTP), and of all the workers who support our trade Union movement throughout Venezuela.

Bolivarian National Union of Workers and Postal Workers of Venezuela SINTRAPOSTAL- VENEZUELA, (STTP) Union-postal training plan 2022-2023:

1. "We will continue with the second phase of training in another 10 states of the country, which were pending: Bolívar, Táchira, Mérida, Zulia, Trujillo, Sucre, Monagas, Barinas, Yaracuy and Lara, where we will train five to seven leaders per state, but in addition, training.
2. The training process in each of the states will continue to have an intensive duration of five days in person, maintaining biosafety standards and respecting radical weeks, except in the cases of radical weeks, which will continue through videoconferences, so in which we can continue with the process of Union-postal formation.

3. Roger Jimenez will be in charge of the training as the main person in charge, accompanied by: Leonel Torrealba, Jose Pedron, Ioldan Hernandez and Jose Jaspe, all revolutionary Union leaders of the Venezuelan telegraph postal sector.
4. The topics to be developed in the second phase of union-postal training will be the following:
  - a. Training on the defense of the rights, benefits, and interests of the working class before the ministry of labor. The speakers will be the Union leader Loldan Hernandez and Leonel Torrealba. Duration: 16 hours per week.
  - b. Training on the use of technology to boost working class solidarity worldwide. The speaker will be the Union leader Roger Jimenez. Duration: eight hours per week.
  - c. Training on the defense of salary and institutional income of the Venezuelan postal system. The speakers will be the union leaders Jose Pedron and Jose Jasper. Duration: 16 hours per week.
5. The Union executive committee will continue to take the opportunity of this training process in each of the states to unionize as many active and retired workers as possible.
6. At the end of the training process, we will hold videoconferences where all the members of the executive committee of the national Union will participate, with the purpose of carrying out objective studies on the strengthening of our Union organization and actions that protect the lives of workers in these times of pandemic.”

## **Palestine**

“Comrades and Leaders of CUPW-STTP: since PPSWU established in 2010 13 years ago, we started to defending workers' rights, but the last five years have been clear progress, strength and building capacities, continuing democratic work, and engaging women and youth in the Union.

All that because of the project between PPSWU and CUPW to summarize you have support our struggle to be stronger and our worker's life to be better.

Therefore, according to the current situation in Palestine and COVID-19, our proposal for the project in the coming years 2022-2023 is:

1. Union Periodic meetings: 12 meetings will be held within the years 2022-2023, the meetings will be about one every two months (due to COVID-19) and will discuss all matters relating to postal workers on districts level, follow-up complaints, reports, and collective negotiations regularly and effectively.
2. PPSWU Sub-Conferences and 6<sup>th</sup> Conference April –June 2023”

## **French Africa**

The 4<sup>th</sup> UNI-Africa Post and Logistics Conference was held in Dakar on March 20, 2017, and was attended by participants from the organization’s six Regions. It featured discussions around a general

theme: “Moving Forward Towards a New Africa: mobilizing, organizing and innovating in the postal Sector.”

This project, funded by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), was implemented in the course of 2018.

Three Unions from three different countries – the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and Niger – were involved. We are currently in discussions with UNI-Africa on the continuation of the project for 2023.

### **Trinidad and Tobago**

In development for 2023 with Trinidad & Tobago Postal Workers Union –joint Union education.



## APPENDIX B

# 2019-2023 INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS

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### **Covered by Appendix "R": International Postal Fund – Except Where Otherwise Specified**

#### **2019**

UNI Americas Post & Logistic Regional Committee  
Montevideo, Uruguay - March 19  
George Floresco

International Delegation to Ireland/ James Connelly Centre  
Belfast, Ireland - April 15 to 22

PPSWU Training  
Amman, Jordan - April 26 to 28  
Jan Simpson and Denis Lemelin

May Day in Cuba  
La Havana, Cuba - April 28 to May 4  
Jan Simpson, Julee Sanderson, Jeff Callaghan, Don Foreman

In March 2020, the global pandemic took hold and CUPW instituted a travel ban that lasted until spring 2022.

#### **2022**

Canada-Colombia Frontlines Delegation July 2022

##### Joint Statement

In July 2022, Canadian labour leaders went to Colombia to stand in solidarity with Colombian labour and human rights defenders. Leaders from the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the National Union of Public and General Employees, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada joined the Canada-Colombia Frontlines Delegation, a multi-Union initiative created to provide urgent protection and solidarity to labour and social movements in Colombia.

##### Delegates:

Nancy Beauchamp, former National Director Metro Montreal  
Amanda Cowie, Regional Grievance Officer

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