



February marks Black History Month

CUPE NATIONAL: As we celebrate February as Black History Month, HEU/CUPE would like to recognize the many union activists and community organizers of African descent, who continue to help build brave and resilient communities and workplaces.

We are grateful to those who continue to resist and build within our unions, in our workplaces and our communities. From bargaining for more inclusive and equity-based language in our collective agreements, to challenging anti-Black racism in our schools and our communities, to on-the-ground organizing and mobilizing, people of African descent have been helping to build more equitable societies despite systemic barriers.

In its preliminary report on the current realities faced by African Canadians, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent noted the need to remember and recognize Canada's history of enslavement, racial segregation, and marginalization – and how that continues to impact people of African descent.

Many factors combine to paint a bleak picture for many people of African descent across Canada. They face disproportionate poverty levels, racism and ongoing police violence. The UN Working Group notes that children of African descent are disproportionately taken away from their homes by child welfare agencies on dubious grounds. People of African descent are also chronically over-represented in the criminal justice system.

As a labour union, HEU/CUPE is committed to negotiating and enforcing collective agreements that do not tolerate discrimination. We will fight any harassment that our members face because they are of African descent. And as part of social movements against discrimination and for equality, we will continue to pressure employers and governments to bring in employment equity and implement the recommendations in the UN Working Group's preliminary report.

We encourage members to address anti-Black racism in their locals, workplaces and communities.

For more information on how to get involved, check [CUPE's website](#) for a detailed list of actions.

HEU is the B.C. health services division of CUPE National.

February 1, 2017