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Inequality and insecurity at work can kill, warns ITUC

Brussels, 28 April 2017 (ITUC OnLine): Divisive employment practices and increasing insecurity at work are fuelling a worldwide epidemic of work-related 'diseases of distress', the ITUC has warned today, the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers. The union-led 28 April memorial day has become the biggest health and safety event in the world.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary said, "Who lives and who dies at work is not an accident of chance. The emergence of increasingly precarious forms of employment is as deliberate as it is deadly. We are seeing unscrupulous employers increasingly pitting worker against worker, segregating them by gender, race or class, using feudal management practices and modern social engineering to meet production goals which are pushing workers over the edge. This is causing deadly accidents and leaving workers exposed to occupational hazards, as well as huge stress which itself can be a killer."

"The evidence shows that better regulated economies with a stronger union presence are both safer and more successful. Governments and companies should stop treating workers as a disposable commodity and instead ensure that their rights are respected. When workers are put under such enormous pressure, often not knowing from one day to the next how many hours they will work or even if they will have work at all, the consequences for health and for safe work are severe. Nowhere is this more apparent than in global supply chains, where the absence of the rule of law means that the worst employers are setting the standard."

"Unions mean less inequality, more sustainable work practices and economic security. The same collective strength that delivers better wages also makes work safer and healthier. The attack on employment protections, driven by corporate-dominated globalisation, is putting short-term profit taking over the long-term economic and social benefits of decent work. It's time to re-write the rules of the global economy so that the rule of law, respect for rights and human dignity are at the centre rather than treated as an impediment to doing business," said Burrow.

International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers, also called International Workers' Memorial Day takes place on 28 April each year. Tens of thousands of activities are taking place worldwide highlighting the human cost of poor working conditions, the role of trade unions in making work safer and pledging to 'fight for the living' www.28april.org. This year, the ITUC has chosen to mobilise under the motto motto "Unsafe and unfair - discrimination on the job hurts us all".

To read more: <https://www.equaltimes.org/we-are-all-sickened-by-inequality#.WQMEMcYlFaQ>

See also: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/28-april-2017-unsafe-and-unfair-18490>

The ITUC represents 181 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates.

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