Statement from National TULO on far-right and racist violence

Unions have a proud history of standing up against racism and the far right – and we will continue to play our part in workplaces and communities to bring workers together, and to stand firm against those who sow hatred and division.

The events that took place in Southport last week were devastating – and our heartfelt thoughts are with the families and loved ones of the bereaved and the injured. We send our solidarity and thanks to the public service workers who have helped to safeguard, treat and support those who were affected.

We are horrified to see the devastation felt by all of us, and particularly by those affected in Southport, being weaponised and misused to spread hatred and division over the past week.

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Organised far-right and racist groups have deliberately taken a tragedy, combined it with outright lies and disinformation, and used it to whip up fear and violence. In towns and cities across the country we've seen riots, attacks on Muslim and Black communities, and violence against asylum seekers and migrants.

We have also seen working people attacked while doing their jobs. Our police and emergency and public service workers, and those working in retail, hospitality and transport have been targeted with threats, abuse and violence.

The hate spread over the past few days cannot be allowed to stand. Racism and violence must be confronted with acts of solidarity in our communities against those distorting tragedies for their own ends, just to sow hatred. Those who have caused this violence must be brought to justice, including those inciting the violence online or behind the scenes. There is a huge amount of work to do to build a new spirit of hope and unity to stop workers and communities being pitted against each other.

But while these have been dark days, we have also seen rays of light in the darkness. We send our deepest thanks and solidarity to the public service workers, in Southport and across the country, who have been, and still are, playing their part in the response: those who put themselves in harm's way to keep others safe, those who treat and care for the injured, those who support the grieving and traumatised, and those who help put communities back together again when they've been torn apart by violence and division.

We also thank the community activists and workers who have helped with the clear up, and all those who have said to the far-right thugs 'not in my name'. And we agree with the Prime Minister when he says he *"won't shy away from calling this what it is: far-right thuggery..... I want you to know this violent mob do not represent our country."*

Unions have a proud history of standing up against racism and the far right – and we will continue to play our part in workplaces and communities to bring workers together, and to stand firm against those who sow hatred and division.

The trade union movement is built on the principles of solidarity and unity, and that unity has never been more important. We reaffirm our commitment to building solidarity and uniting working people against the far-right. Now is the time for communities to come together, and for us to remember the words of Jo Cox: "*We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us".*

National TULO: the 11 trade unions that are affiliated to the Labour Party.

Press office

Member requiring help?

GMB UNION

07958 156846

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk