



MPs and trade unions welcome the ‘first step’ in the fight to tackle workplace deaths

The Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG) welcomes the Government’s announcement today to commemorate all those who have died tragically at work after a long trade union campaign.

John McDonnell MP, Parliamentary Convenor of the TUCG, said:

‘The tragic reality is that we are failing to protect large numbers of people who are still dying or being seriously injured simply as a result of earning a living. This important symbolic gesture is a welcomed first step but we now need the Government move on to tackle workplace health and safety head-on - by robust and clear legislation on the one hand and a dynamic resourced enforcement agency on the other.’

Ronnie Draper, President of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), said:

‘The news that Workers Memorial Day is to be recognized in Britain is fantastic and testament to the campaigning strength of Trade Unions and other pressure groups. The B.F.A.W.U. through their Parliamentary Group and the T.U.C.G. has made the demand to have Workers Memorial Day officially recognized as a National Day of Commemoration one of its keystone campaigns. We must recognize the role played by the Hazards Organisation and F.A.C.K (Families Against Corporate Killing), for their tenacity in bringing this Campaign to the fore. The slogan “Remember The Dead, Fight for the Living”, must never be forgotten, it should be used as a constant reminder that lives lost at work should not be in vain, and the protection of workers must be our ultimate goal.’

Michael Clapham MP (Barnsley West & Penistone) said:

‘I am pleased that the Government has given official recognition to Workers’ Memorial Day. It has long been an important date in the international trade union calendar and by lifting its profile in the UK we will remember the suffering of those who have gone before us and make health and safety apart of our every day thinking.’

Bob Crow, General Secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), said:

‘RMT welcomes any confirmation that the Government have formally recognised Workers Memorial Day and it’s about time too. However, a day of remembrance is not enough. We need proper legislation and punishment that gets rid of the bad bosses and corporate killers.’

- Workers Memorial Day is an internationally recognised day on which workers and trade unionists conduct events, demonstrations, vigils and a whole host of other activities to commemorate those who have died, been seriously injured, or made seriously ill by their work.

- The Bakers’ Union Parliamentary Group consists of around 30 Labour MPs and meets regularly along with the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) – the largest independent food workers union in the British Isles.

- The TUCG brings together eight major unions (BFAWU, FBU, NAPO, NUJ, PCS, POA, RMT and URTU) with the objective of co-ordinating campaigning activities on key issues facing their members.

- Following on from our Parliamentary Reception last April, the Bakers Union Parliamentary Group (on behalf of the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group) has focussed on raising the profile of the trade union movement's long standing campaign to get official recognition for Workers' Memorial Day.

- Most recently John McDonnell MP tabled EDM 501 Workers' Memorial Day which has 67 signatories.