

The London bombings - global solidarity

Messages of support from trade union movements around the world



The TUC received many messages of support from trade unionists around the world after the bombings in London on 7 July. This is just a small, edited selection – often from trade union movements with recent experience of similar, and in some cases more common, outrages. We are truly grateful for all the messages, which speak with one, global voice against terrorism, and against the way that terrorism always hurts ordinary working people most.

The first message that the TUC received on 7 July was an especially moving message from the General Secretary of the **Palestinian** General Federation of Trade Unions, Shaher Sae'd:

“On behalf of myself and in the name of the Executive Committee of the PGFTU and all the Palestinian workers we express our condemnation of the terrorist attack which caused the death of innocent persons in London this morning. Please convey our deep condolences to the families of the dead persons, to the workers in Britain and to your people. Hoping that peace and freedom will prevail all over the world....”

A similar response was received from Amir Peretz AM, Chairman of Histadrut, the **Israeli** trade union movement.

Immediately the news of the bombings became known, other European trade union movements with experience of bombing campaigns – in the case of **Spain**, very recent and frighteningly similar – marked their concern with public demonstrations of solidarity.

Candido Mendez, General Secretary of the UGT, said:

“We are deeply shocked by the explosions on the underground network and a bus in the city of London. On behalf of the UGT Spain, we would like to express our solidarity and full support to all workers and British people. These barbaric blasts bring to our minds the Madrid outrages’ painful memories. The people who are responsible for these vile and inhuman acts will not succeed with their aims of ending freedom and democracy.”

His colleague Jose Fidalgo, general Secretary of the CC.OO, wrote:

“On behalf of CC.OO and in my own name and that of our million affiliates, I want to express our deep sadness and grief over the barbaric rush-hour bomb attacks in London yesterday. We who have lived through similar events know what it means to lose family and friends through senseless acts of terrorism. We join you and the union movement worldwide in condemning this and all acts of terror. We kindly request you to convey our sympathy and condolences to the victims’ families and friends. We also want to thanks those who were involved in the rescue efforts.”

Jose Elorrieta, General Secretary of the Basque Workers Solidarity-ELA also sent a message of support and condolences.

And in **Italy**, trade unions united in calling for a work stoppage on the day after the bombings. CGIL General Secretary Guglielmo Epifani said in his message on 7 July that “with great consternation we have learnt the news of a series of terrorist attacks which hit the city of London this morning. We are shocked by the violence

affecting once again innocent people and we convey our sympathy to the English workers in this dramatic situation.” Luigi Angeletti of UIL added: “We need to provide a stronger common response to terrorism, which intends to stifle our ideas of freedom and democracy.” And at the CISL Congress, General Secretary Savino Pezzotta said: “We reassert our firm condemnation of terrorism, its massacres, and the logic with which it attempts – obviously unsuccessfully – to weaken democracy and to induce widespread uncertainty and political and social instability.”

One of the first phone messages to TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber was particularly welcomed. Four years ago, Congress was suspended when the Twin Towers in New York were destroyed on 11 September. **United States** trade union leader, AFL-CIO President John J Sweeney, wrote on 7 July:

“On behalf of the AFL-CIO, we extend to all members of the TUC and working families across Great Britain our sympathy and condolences. We express our outrage against these brutal attacks on innocent people as they travel to work in the morning. Our solidarity and support remains with all those who are now engaged in the emergency work of attending to those killed and injured in these unspeakable destructive acts of terrorism.”

Canadian Labour Congress President Kenneth V Georgetti was in London for a conference on the day of the bombings. He later wrote: “I write to express our total repudiation of the terrorist acts perpetrated today in London which claimed the lives of innocent people and left many commuters and bystanders wounded. These cruel events are nothing less than an assault on civility and rationality, intended to plant the seeds of panic and terror in the population.”

From across the Muslim world, messages of solidarity across faiths came to the TUC. Noubir El Amoui, General Secretary of the CDT in **Morocco** wrote: “Following the sad events in London on 7 July, the Executive of the CDT-Morocco would like to convey its condolences to the families of the victims of these terrorist acts, and at the same time it strongly denounces the use of violence around the world.”

Meanwhile Abdessalem Jrad, General Secretary of the UGT in **Tunisia** wrote: “Tunisian trade unionists are profoundly shocked and saddened by these abominable acts.”

Our nearest neighbours also rallied round. **France’s** CGT General Secretary Bernard Thibault wrote: “I have seen with shock and indignation the terrible events which have hit the population of London. I add my condemnation of these acts which cannot be justified.” Francois Chereque of the CFDT added: “In these difficult times, the CFDT extends its solidarity with the union movement of Great Britain. We reaffirm our condemnation of terrorism. It is unacceptable.” And Jean-Claude Mailly of CGT-Force Ouvriere wrote: “We assure you of our solidarity to the victims and their families.”

David Begg, General Secretary of the **Irish** Congress of Trade Unions sent a personal message of support to the TUC.

Further afield, the TUC received messages from the President of the **Australian** Council of Trade Unions, Sharan Burrow: “Our deepest sympathy on today’s

tragedy. Our hearty goes out to the families of those killed or injured.” **Japan** TUC-Rengo President Kiyoshi Sasamori wrote: “RENGO stands with the TUC, as well as unions all over the world, in the fight against terrorism and in the challenge to create a world of peace and security.” And Zhang Junjiu, General Secretary of the **All-China** Federation of Trade Unions added: “On behalf of the ACFTU and Chinese workers, I express our strong indignation at, and our vehement condemnation of such brutalities, and through you, convey our sincere greetings to those victims and their families.” In **Hong Kong**, Leung Fu-Wah, Vice Chairman of the HKFTU said: “We would like to express our deepest concern and sympathy towards our friends, the victims of this terrorist attack. We also hope that the British police will track down those responsible for the deadly explosions in London.” John de Payva, President of the NTUC in **Singapore** said: “It is with a heavy heart that we learnt of the explosions in London which killed and injured many innocent people. We are deeply shocked by the terrorist actions and condemn those who seek to gain advantage by resorting to violence.”

In Africa, **Nigerian** Labour Congress President Adams Oshiomhole, in London to see the Prime Minister ahead of the Gleneagles summit just days before, said: “Congress finds the bombings utterly inhuman and senseless. We condemn the perpetrators in the strongest terms. They are enemies of humanity, who chose a wrong forum and abominable means to further whatever objectives they might have had. However, in the face of all this, we were impressed like the rest of the world with the stoic dignity with which the people of UK responded to the terrorist incident and the promptness of the emergency operations, a testimony to the resilience and sense of purpose of the working people.”

And **Sierra Leone** Labour Congress Secretary General M B Williams wrote that the SLLC “strongly condemns this cowardly act of terrorism and shares with you the pain and shock this has caused to so many people and their families.”

Traditional friends of Britain sent messages of support as ever – Gerd-Liv Valla of **Norway**’s LO said “Forces which are willing to sacrifice innocent people in order to achieve attention for their political agendas cannot be tolerated. The international union movement must stand together in representing the interests of the working class which is so often the victim of ruthless groups striving for power. We are with you in solidarity.” And Tony Zarb, General Secretary of the GWU in **Malta** sent this message: “The GWU condemns the acts that took place and also sees them as a direct attack on workers and their families who were exposed to the dangers that resulted in numerous deaths and many more casualties.”

Michael Sommer of the DGB in **Germany** wrote that “I am convinced that the United Kingdom has the strength to confront this terrorist violence in a united attempt by all democratic forces. You may rest assured that the DGB is with you in this difficult time.” And Fritz Veretnitsch, President of **Austria**’s OGB condemned “the horrific terrorist attack which has so cruelly struck the people of the UK.”

Other messages came from Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ghana, Latvia, the Netherlands, Nepal, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Turkey and the Ukraine. They are still arriving. We thank them all.

Finally, the world's trade union movement also sent messages of support. Next year, the TUC hopes that a new global union movement will arise out of the ICFTU and the WCL, and they were united on 7 July in sending their solidarity. WCL's Willy Thys said "WCL remains convinced that violence is never a solution and condemns strongly this new act of terrorism which affected so many workers and women workers who were going to work."

Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ICFTU said: "I am writing to express the ICFTU's outrage at the bomb attacks that have taken place in London today, our solidarity with British working people in the face of these appalling acts and our sincere condolences to the victims and their families."



A minute's silence outside the ICFTU Headquarters in Brussels