



We Keep Each Other Safe

CUPE 4600 Statement on the ongoing demonstrations in Ottawa

January 31, 2022

CUPE 4600 unequivocally condemns and opposes the ongoing demonstrations in Ottawa.

Many of our members live and work in downtown Ottawa, and are experiencing firsthand the violence and hate that has been on display in our streets since last Friday.

This weekend we witnessed people marching with Nazi and Confederate flags, unchallenged by those marching with them. We watched footage of demonstrators proudly declaring themselves to be white supremacists, while not a single person in the crowd spoke up to denounce them. We saw the clip of dozens of white people making a mockery of Indigenous culture by singing gibberish and dancing in a fake 'drum circle'.

Our friends and neighbors were spat at and called homophobic slurs. Fellow workers were verbally assaulted and threatened, just for trying to do their jobs.

Protestors attacked the staff at the Shepherds of Good Hope, demanding they be given food intended for the houseless.

Today, many of us are unable to access the essential services we need to survive, as threats of violence have forced a number of schools, daycares, libraries, and community health centers to close.

And we should remember that the weekend opened with the cancellation, due to safety concerns, of an interfaith vigil to commemorate the 5 year anniversary of the shooting at a Quebec City mosque that left 6 people dead and 19 injured.

Demonstrators can make all the noise they want about vaccines or truckers but we see them for what they really are: an angry mob fueled by hate and white supremacy, taking delight in terrorizing our town.

For many of us, it's been a scary and frustrating weekend, exacerbated by the feelings of isolation and separation caused by the pandemic. Figuring out how to respond to this kind of violence in our city can feel really hard.

Ultimately, the only effective way to push back against the rise of white supremacist violence is to affirm and strengthen our commitment to building powerful movements grounded in anti-racism and anti-colonialism, movements that actively support reproductive rights, Black liberation, Indigenous struggles, disability justice, queer and trans movements, and which oppose anti-semitism.

Today, as hate-fuelled individuals continue to occupy the streets of our city, CUPE 4600 finds strength and inspiration in the incredible work being done locally by groups like the [Criminalization and Punishment Education Project](#), the [Ottawa Black Diaspora Coalition](#), [ROSE](#), the [Coalition Against More Surveillance](#), [Horizon Ottawa](#), the [Asilu Collective](#), and all the other amazing organizations in this town that stay in the fight, day in and day out, for a better city and a better world.

CUPE 4600 will be making donations to Shepherds of Good Hope and to the [Ottawa Community Care Fund](#), which has been set up by [ROSE](#) to facilitate mutual aid for marginalized people in Ottawa affected by the demonstration.

If you are need of mental or emotional support or mental health crisis intervention as a result of the current situation, the Ottawa Distress Centre can be reached by phone 613-238-3311 (24hrs), by text at 343-306-5550 (10am-11pm), or via chat at <http://dcottawa.on.ca> (10am-11pm).

We keep each other safe.

**Love and solidarity,
CUPE 4600**