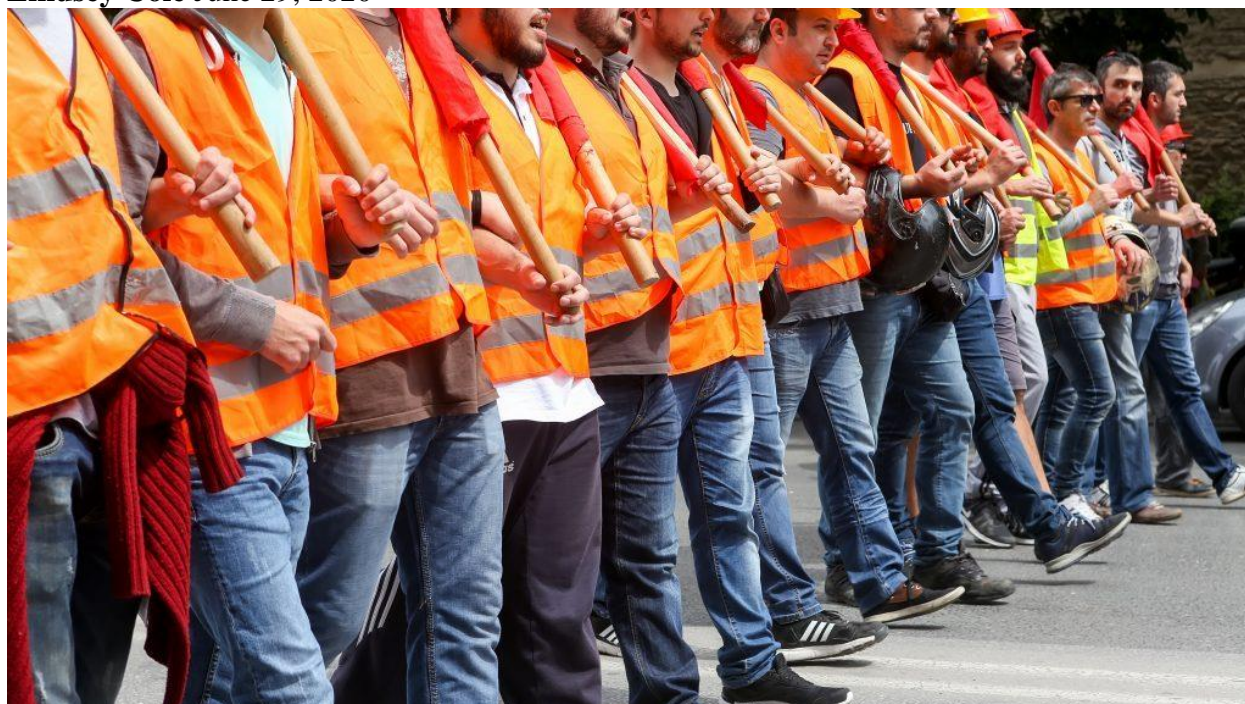


UPDATE: Industry rallies behind construction companies victimized by hate crimes

Lindsey Cole June 29, 2020



Construction industry stakeholders, unions and associations are standing behind the companies that were the target of recent hate crimes after nooses were found at multiple construction sites across Toronto.

Police are currently investigating after one noose was found at a project being built by The Daniels Corporation at Dundas Street East and Sumach Street in Toronto's Regent Park community, the company confirmed June 26. The other was found on June 25 at a tower project being built by EllisDon and Govan Brown in a joint venture at 81 Bay St. This comes just weeks after nooses were found by two subtrade workers on June 10 at the Michael Garron Hospital project, also being built by EllisDon.

Toronto Police Services were contacted immediately and separate private investigations by The Daniels Corporation, EllisDon and Govan Brown have also been undertaken.

Shortly after the incidents were made public, several industry stakeholders took to social media and issued statements reacting to the crimes.

Joseph Mancinelli, international vice-president and regional manager for Central and Eastern Canada

for the Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), said in a statement the union has zero tolerance for any and all forms of racism.

“The horrendous hate crimes committed on several jobsites in the Greater Toronto Area are despicable,” he said. “Such ignorant acts of hate do not represent the integrity of our industry or the men and women who are dedicated to building stronger, inclusive communities across Ontario.”

He reiterated the industry's continued efforts to build a culture where people can work free of discrimination, but added “it is clear in recent events, that as an industry we have work to do to eradicate racism in its entirety.”

This is a disgraceful act by someone weak and cowardly

— Geoff Smith

EllisDon

Tom Reid, international vice-president for the first district (Canada) for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), also issued a statement declaring these types of acts have no place in society.

“We refuse, and will always refuse, to condone or tolerate dictatorship or oppression of any kind. We will find and expel from our midst any who might attempt to destroy, by subversion, all that we stand for,” it reads in part. “The IBEW will continue to oppose communism, Nazism, or any other subversive ‘ism.’”

The Canadian Construction Association (CCA) also expressed its disgust.

“We are shocked and disgusted by the racist, hateful actions that have recently taken place on Toronto construction sites. The guilty individual(s) must be identified and prosecuted,” the CCA tweeted.

[Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#) president Richard Lyall called the acts “disturbing and shocking” in a statement, adding they are “denounced by everyone who works in our industry. These are acts of cowardice and racism that have no place in our industry nor society. The perpetrators must be caught and prosecuted.”

He commended EllisDon, Govan Brown and The Daniels Corporation for immediately contacting police when the nooses were found and is now calling on the law to “do everything in its power to find the culprits.”

Leaders of The Daniels Corporation, EllisDon and Govan Brown have all stated these acts reinforce the fact that more must be done to evoke change.

A statement to the Daily Commercial News from Mitchell Cohen, president of The Daniels Corporation, says, “This deplorable act against the Black community is unacceptable and we reaffirm that there is zero tolerance for racism, prejudice and hate on our construction sites and within our organization. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident within the construction industry and reinforces that more action is required.”

According to a statement from EllisDon, once the paraphernalia was discovered site leadership teams “immediately started undertaking emergency stand downs and tool box talks to address all subtrade workers on site to condemn the actions, offer support, and ask the individual or individuals to own up to their actions.”

Geoff Smith, president and CEO of EllisDon, and Joseph Kirk, president of Govan Brown and Associates Limited, condemned the acts in a joint statement.

“This is a disgraceful act by someone weak and cowardly,” said Smith. “We will do everything possible to identify, prosecute and evict anyone involved from our industry. The perpetrator has acted in a way to try and achieve notoriety and even influence by sowing division and hatred. We will never allow that to happen.”

Kirk echoed his comments.

“We boldly stand behind inclusion and diversity, values that are woven into the fabric of our organization,” he said. “We will not tolerate this behaviour on our project sites or anything that we are involved with as a company.”

Both The Daniels Corporation and EllisDon/Govan Brown have started discussions with construction unions, associations and industry partners about the incidents, highlighting this behaviour is unacceptable.

“Daniels stands staunchly against racism and prejudice, individual and systemic, in all its forms,” writes Cohen. “We have worked hard over the years to support and foster vibrant, inclusive communities. We will continue to support communities and organizations that work toward creating equality in a world where it is most definitely needed.”

The Daniels Corporation took part in a community event on Sunday, June 28 coined Regent Park Against Racism. It was organized by Regent Park Mothers of Peace, the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association and members of the Regent Park community.

Members of the East York community where the Michael Garron Hospital project is being constructed also came out to show their support and posted anti-racism messages and artwork at the entrance of the construction site.

Smith, from EllisDon, has also penned an open letter to local MPPs regarding the last incident. Read more here: <https://www.ellisdon.com/news/our-response-to-mpps-rima-berns-mcgown-and-peter-tabuns/>

Police have not laid charges in any of the incidents and are appealing to anyone with information to contact 55 Division at 416-808-5500 or Crime Stoppers to remain anonymous.