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Jerry Dias speaks to children at the Azraq Refugee Camp near Amman, Jordan. There are currently 10,000 shelters in the camp capable of housing up to 50,000 refugees.

Unifor visits refugee camp

Unifor National President Jerry Dias and Human Rights and International Director Mohamad Alsadi traveled to Jordan recently to witness the frontline work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to help Syrian refugees in that country.

Unifor is a proud international partner of UNHCR, donating funds from its Social Justice Fund to help assist Syrian refugee families access shelter, food, schooling and community services.

"We saw families today that have lost everything," said Dias. "These people have lost their home, they've lost their land, they've lost their country. Their families are scattered everywhere, but they haven't lost their dignity and they're living for another opportunity, an opportunity for their children."

Following a briefing by

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Online Equity Survey Launched

When Unifor was established, the National Executive Board made a commitment to build a union that was vibrant, dynamic, progressive and inclusive.

It was understood that the strength of Unifor comes from the membership and is reflected by the diversity

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Auto Talks set to begin

Formal contract talks between Unifor and the Detroit Three automakers are set to begin the second week of August, with the top priority of securing new investment by the automakers in Canada.

"The auto industry is important to the Canadian economy generally, and absolutely vital in the communities where assembly and parts plants are located," Unifor National

President Jerry Dias said.

The auto industry is vital to Canada's economic wellbeing, employing 125,500 people across Canada while contributing millions to taxes and local charities, new research from Unifor shows.

Across Canada, 125,400 people are employed directly in the auto industry, producing 2,268,996 cars and light trucks (or 6,216 per day) worth \$93.5 billion

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Convention 2016 updates

As the convention approaches, watch this space for updates:

We're excited to offer a mobile event guide to attendees featuring speaker information, session schedules, maps and much more! The guide will be available shortly at the Apple store – stay tuned for details

Join us on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/548915251967400/>

Take to the streets prior to convention to show your union pride and solidarity in Ottawa's PRIDE parade. Sunday, August 21, 1-3 p.m. Allies are encouraged to attend.

Look out for #Unifor2016 Twitter. Follow along for updates and join the conversation by using the hashtag #Unifor2016

For details, go to unifor.org/convention2016



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Help change Ontario's labour laws

Today in Ontario, more than 1.7 million workers are earning at or around minimum wage and many Ontarians are trapped working precarious part-time, temporary, contract and subcontracted jobs, without a union.

The Government of Ontario has initiated its "Changing Workplace Review" to examine the out-dated Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act. In order to seize the once-in-a-generation opportunity presented by the provincial review, the OFL launched the "Make It Fair" campaign to push for employment reform.

As part of this campaign, the OFL and unions across Ontario are conducting a survey on precarious work - an issue that is fast becoming the new normal for Ontario's seven million workers. The goal of the survey is to speak



Support for the fight for \$15 campaign at Unifor Young Worker's conference.

to union members about their experiences and the experiences of families with precarious work.

Take the survey here: makeitfair.ca/precarious_work_survey

"Inequality and precarious work are on the rise across our growing province, but collectively each of us has the power to change the law and help Ontario workers out of poverty," said OFL President Chris Buckley.

"There is an urgent need for new laws as workers,

particularly young workers, increasingly find themselves in part-time or contract positions with low pay, few benefits and unpredictable schedules," said Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier. "Our goal is to ensure that the voices of union members are heard in the changes that will come."

Upon finishing the survey, participants will have a chance to enter to win a \$200 gift card for either Loblaws or Metro grocery stores.

>> Continued from "Online Equity Survey..." on page 1

of members and activists, including: women, racialized and Indigenous workers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers, young workers, workers with disabilities and other equity seeking groups, being represented in the union, at all levels.

To assess how Unifor is doing in promoting equity, the union is strengthening its equity plan by taking a look internally at participation levels.

Every member is encouraged to complete the demographics survey. The survey takes less than five minutes.



Members from local 2002 attending the Young Worker's Conference at the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario.

Data collected will help provide insight on how diversity and representation translates in the workplace, locals and in

the national union.

For more information and the survey link visit unifor.org/demographics

>> Continued from “Unifor visits refugee camp...” on page 1

senior UNHCR management on the current refugee situation, Dias and Alsadi toured the Azraq Refugee Camp, where they visited the on-site hospital, participated in a variety of community activities and met with individual refugee families.

“Currently there are 10,000 shelters in the Azraq camp capable of housing up to 50,000 refugees,” said Alsadi. “Meeting the families in person provided a better understanding of the everyday challenges of living in a refugee camp.”

In addition to those sheltered at the camp, nearly 80 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan live off-site in nearby communities.

Eight out of 10 live under the Jordanian poverty line with limited access to health care, education and everyday necessities including food, clothing and blankets, which the camps provide.

UNHCR’s innovative Lifeline cash assistance program for refugees in Jordan is a world first, with 97 per cent of donations going directly to refugees’ pockets as they access funds through iris scan technology.

“I’m asking local unions to please adopt a family here in Jordan”, said Dias. “It doesn’t cost a lot of money but it makes a huge difference as they transition to the new life that they deserve.”

During visits to the homes of refugee families



UNHCR workers update Unifor National President Jerry Dias and Mohamad Alsadi Unifor Human Rights and International Dept. Director on the daily living condition of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

in Amman, Jordan, Dias and Alsadi heard firsthand how Lifeline helps to provide shelter, an opportunity for children to go to school and a sense of hope for the future.

“This is about opening our hearts and opening our wallets,” said Dias. “This is about us being Unifor, and doing what it is that we do

best - caring for people.”

View a photo album of Unifor’s visit to the **Azraq Refugee Camp:** www.facebook.com/UniforCanada/

To donate to UNHCR’s Lifeline visit: <https://donate.unhcr.org/gu-en/lifeline>. More photos on page 4.

>> Continued from “Auto Talks set to begin...” on page 1

in 2015, (or \$256 million per day).

“That kind of output of manufacturing goods, and the good jobs that come with it, is not easily replaced,” Dias said. “That’s why we have made securing new investment the number one priority for this year’s auto talks.”

Negotiations with the Detroit Three automakers begin August 10 and 11 in Toronto. Unifor has made new investment in Canada, including new product allocations, the top priority.

In auto communities across Ontario, Unifor activists have been speaking out about the importance of the industry in their communities, including in Oshawa where Local 222’s

GM Matters campaign has gathered more than 8,000 names on a petition.

Besides the production and economic output, Dias pointed to the taxes paid and charitable giving of autoworkers, and their importance to the communities in which they live.

Across Canada, auto workers contributed \$1.9 billion in income, payroll and sales taxes (or \$5.2 million per day).

“That money goes to support services that we all depend upon, such health care, education and social services – the sorts of things that make Canada such a great place to live,” Dias said.

For more details and background please visit unifor.org/AutoTalks16.

VIA Rail members ratify new deal

Members of Unifor Local 100 and National Council 4000 have voted to accept a new four-year deal with VIA Rail. The agreement, reached June 12, 2016, was overwhelmingly accepted by a margin of 80 per cent nationwide.

“Our members are dedicated to providing reliable service to VIA Rail customers and we fully expected the company to recognize our efforts,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. “This agreement continues to build on the solid gains at the bargaining table and would not have been possible without the solid support of our members.” The new collective

agreement includes enhanced benefits, improved contract language and wage increases. Wages will improve by 2 per cent retroactive to January 1, 2016 and then by 2.5 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent in the following years. Unifor represents over 2,000 VIA Rail employees including maintenance workers, on-board service personnel, chefs, sales agents and customer service staff. Several work rules were improved while important new initiatives such as Unifor’s Woman’s Advocate program and the Canadian Community Fund were also introduced.



IN THIS ISSUE Unifor sends message that securing new investment is the priority as auto talks are set to begin. Social Justice Fund Mission to Jordan to visit Syrian refugee families. Unifor works to strengthen its equity plan with new online survey to measure internal participation levels. VIA Rail members ratify a new four year contract.



Unifor National President Jerry Dias visits the Khalda Registration Centre, the Azraq Refugee Camp and the home of the Talal family, one of 100 refugee families Unifor is helping to support in partnership with the UNHCR.