



PRESS RELEASE

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CHIEF MINISTER'S MESSAGE ON WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 2020

Today is a day when we must pause to reflect about the lives lost at work.

About the families of those who have left home in the morning to work and have not returned.

We must think about those who have been seriously injured at work, suffering injuries that have changed their lives for the worse.

We have holidays to celebrate many things, but we had no institutional marker for those who had made the supreme sacrifice, losing their lives or their health, at work in order to put food on the tables of their families.

That is why, eight years ago, when I first became Chief Minister, I provided for a Bank Holiday to celebrate these lives, to remember the dead and fight for the living.

That is the slogan that best encapsulates what we must do on a day like today.

Today, I have marked the day with the Minister for Employment and Unite in the lobby of Parliament in a much reduced ceremony to that which we are used to holding.

We have joined colleagues in the GHA in holding a minutes silence at midday.

As we kept that silence had in mind the powerful slogan of Workers Memorial Day.

Remember the dead – Fight for the living.

How apposite that message will be this year in particular, when we think of health workers around the world who have lost their lives at work treating those with COVID 19.

As the grandson of a man who died at work, I remember the grandfather I never knew and my pride in having introduced the observance of this day in Gibraltar.

Again this year I am also rightly proud that no worker has died at work in Gibraltar in the past year.



None have died at work in Gibraltar since I became Chief Minister, despite a huge increase in construction in the time I have been in office, and I hope none ever will again.

In most instances, deaths and injuries at work have happened because there is a lack of investment in the health and safety measures that must be taken in ALL work environments.

That is unacceptable.

In this, our eighth year of observing Workers Memorial Day, I will continue to channel all my energy into the protection of everyone in our community, in particular those of our health workers who are on the front line of the battle against COVID 19.