



CRTC ruling a blow to local TV: Unifor

TORONTO, May 15 – Today’s ruling from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission does nothing to stop further cuts to local television news across Canada, Unifor says.

“With the CRTC failing to use the tools at its disposal to help ensure Canadians continue to have reliable news and information about their communities, the ball is now in the federal government’s court to take action,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

“Local TV in this country is in crisis. Unifor had hoped that the CRTC would take that seriously with today’s ruling. We are now looking to the government to act swiftly.”

Dias was critical of the CRTC allowing major broadcasters the opportunity to reduce local news programming far below current levels; and imposing not a single requirement for staffing of local newsrooms and bureaus.

“The time for fine speeches from [CRTC Chair] Jean-Pierre Blais about big media’s corporate responsibility is over. A cabinet directive is needed to do for local TV what the CRTC lacks the will to do,” said Unifor Media Director Howard Law.

With more than 12,000 journalists and media workers in television, newspapers, magazines, news websites and film production, Unifor is Canada’s primary media union.

Law said Unifor is nonetheless pleased by the CRTC decision to revive the popular daily newscasts at the Rogers OMNI stations in Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Italian.

“OMNI plays a vital role in Canada to help our diverse communities feel more at home here. Its continued viability is essential,” Law said.

Law said Unifor applauds the opportunity in the CRTC decision for other TV companies to come forward with their own proposals for even more ethnic programming. Unifor is Canada’s largest union in the private sector, representing more than 310,000 workers. It was formed Labour Day weekend 2013 when the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union merged.