



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union  
c/o 88 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH  
Tel: 075 900 98084 / 079 045 52106 Email: office@caiwu.org.uk

## **For immediate release**

### **Racism and Bullying at Museum of London – Cleaning Contractor Victimizes African and Caribbean Workers – Museum Management in Denial**

London, UK – 24th May 2018

African, Caribbean and some Latin American cleaners at the landmark Museum of London have been the targets of an ongoing campaign of racism and bullying.

Workers employed at the museum by contractor DOC Cleaning have been reporting incidents of racism and bullying for more than a year. The situation has escalated in recent weeks, following the suspension of the cleaning staff's union rep. Charles Owusa Ansah, an African, is currently suspended following an accusation of petty theft for which no evidence has been produced.

Mr Owusa Ansah's suspension, along with a number of other incidents, centre around one of DOC's managers on site at the museum. The manager in question is accused of a series of acts of bullying, racism and petty vindictiveness including:

- Falsely claiming to have issued instructions that weren't carried out in order to get workers suspended
- Behaving towards workers in an aggressive and intimidating manner
- Requiring workers to carry out unreasonable tasks and work to an unreasonable schedule
- Showing favouritism towards workers of Portuguese or Portuguese-speaking origins
- Expecting some cleaners to work to a higher standard than others
- Singling out trade union members and activists for unfair treatment

The Museum itself appears oblivious to the damage that allegations of racism and bullying among its cleaning staff could do to its reputation. The Museum's management has consistently refused to involve itself in the situation. In correspondence, for example, its HR department has described its arrangement with DOC as an 'arms length' contract, claiming that it is unable to involve itself directly in issues arising between DOC and its

staff. While this may be technically true, it is difficult to believe that DOC's contract with the Museum does not explicitly prohibit racism, bullying and victimization. It also seems improbable that the Museum would not have the power to intervene when the actions of its contractor threaten to bring it into disrepute.

According to Alberto Durango, General Secretary of the cleaners' union CAIWU which represents a number of the victimized workers, the Museum will be the focus of protests and possible industrial action until the situation is resolved. 'We've already protested at the Museum,' Mr Durango says, 'and they complained about us upsetting their customers.' He goes on to explain that CAIWU has received threats of legal action from the museum if it continues its protests. 'The Museum,' he says, 'seems to be more concerned with protecting its reputation and preventing democratic protests than in stopping the racism and bullying taking place under its own roof.'

**END**

**Notes to editor:**

For more information, please contact Alberto Durango, CAIWU national organiser, on 075 900 98084 or Bruce Coker, CAIWU organizer, at [bruce@caiwu.org.uk](mailto:bruce@caiwu.org.uk)

<http://www.caiwu.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/cleaners.branch/>