

Employer Didn't Have an OHS Duty to Respond to Public Statements



A correctional officer and his lawyer made public statements regarding white supremacists in the jail. The union claimed the statements 'fanned racial tension' in the workplace and filed a grievance against the employer for failing to make a public statement against the comments. The Grievance Settlement Board agreed that some correctional officers suffered emotional stress as a result of the comments and were subjected to contempt and abuse inside and outside the jail. But it rejected the union's argument that the employer's OHS duties required it to publicly support these employees to reduce their stress and the hostility that they suffered as a result of the statements. The employer acted reasonably in not issuing a press release and dealing with employees' issues as they arose, concluded the Board [*Ontario Public Service Employees Union (Blacquiere et al) v. Ontario (Community Safety and Correctional Services)*, 2015 CanLII 67994 (ON GSB), Sept. 11, 2015].