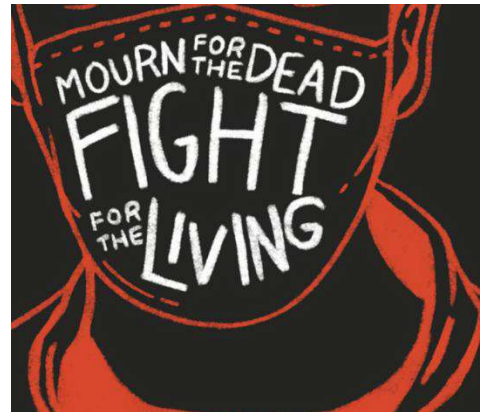


## ON THIS NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING, CORONER'S REVIEW OF MIGRANT DEATHS DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH

(April 28, 2021, Toronto). The Office of the Ontario Coroner released its report and recommendations following the deaths of three migrant farm workers who died from COVID-19. On this National Day of Mourning, organizations serving migrant workers find that the report does not go far enough to protect migrant lives.



Three migrant farm workers from Mexico, Bonifacio Eugenio Romero, Rogelio Munoz Santos and Juan Lopez Chaparro, all died from COVID-19 last year. These men faced a heightened risk for contracting COVID-19 as a result of their working and living conditions.

The Deputy Coroner's [report](#) released on April 27, 2021, provides 35 recommendations, including that the Coroner's Office should consider calling an inquest into the death of migrant farm workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and that it be mandatory to report the deaths of vulnerable persons to the Coroner's Office. The Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario (IAVGO) says the report's recommendations do not go far enough to address root causes of unsafe work.

"Migrant farm workers face unsafe working conditions because the government excludes them from full immigration status on their arrival to Canada," says Jessica Ponting, Community Legal Worker at IAVGO.

"It's an exclusion based on race and means that migrant workers are beholden to their employers for status in Canada, and cannot access basic rights and protections that many Ontarians relied on during the pandemic. The deep implications of this exclusion from full immigration status, and the very subject of racism, were ignored in the Deputy Coroner's report."

Injured Workers Action for Justice, a community group made up of injured workers, are also concerned that governments are not doing enough to protect workers, including migrant workers. They wrote an [open letter](#) to Premier Ford and Prime Minister Trudeau calling for greater protections, including mandatory coroner's inquests into all workplace fatalities.

"Political and government leaders like to pay lip service to workers by calling them 'essential', yet it would appear they are expendable," says their letter. They urge the government to, "Provide immediate and unconditional permanent immigration status for all undocumented and migrant workers. This should include workers who become sick or

injured at work and who are often repatriated to a life of poverty and ill health as a result of workplace injuries sustained in Canada.”

Today, communities are mourning the loss of these three men, and the many more workers who died as a result of their labour. These groups continue to fight for the living and demand that governments do the same.



*For more information please contact IAVGO at 416-924-6477*