

Eighth noose found at Amazon site despite additional security

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Washington, May 27 (RHC)-- The NAACP, state and local officials have denounced what they called continued racism at an Amazon warehouse construction site in Connecticut where eight nooses have been found within a month, despite additional security measures added last weekend.

The latest noose was found at the site in Windsor on Wednesday morning, the day of a scheduled meeting between workers and NAACP officials about safety and security, said Connecticut NAACP President Scot X. Esdaile.

"We have a serious problem in America and it hasn't gone away," Esdaile said. "It's deplorable. It's sickening. It's a sick mindset that Black people have to fight against."

Amazon closed the site over the weekend, saying it was putting additional security measures in place after a seventh noose was found last week. The company closed the site again Wednesday to allow the FBI to investigate after the new noose was found under some electrical materials, Amazon spokesperson Kelly Nantel said in a statement.

"Hate, racism or discrimination have no place in our society and are certainly not tolerated in any Amazon workplace," Nantel said. "We will continue to work with all levels of law enforcement as well as our development partners, to hold the perpetrators accountable and ensure that all members of our community feel valued, respected and safe."

At an afternoon news conference outside the warehouse site, however, Esdaile and state and local officials accused Amazon of not taking the problem seriously enough and not doing enough to stop the racist incidents.

Nuchette Black-Burke, a town council member in Windsor, said many employees at the site are afraid to go to work. She vowed to keep putting pressure on Amazon to solve the problem. "Many people don't understand our history," she said. "A noose? People's heads were put in those and hung from trees, hung from different places. So while people may think that someone's doing this just for giggles and ha-has, no, it's real history that impacts."

Windsor police did not return a message seeking comment Wednesday. Police officials previously denounced the nooses and called them "potential" hate crimes. Mayor Donald Trinks said police officers have been stationed at the site around the clock.

Esdaile said NAACP officials were not let onto the site Wednesday to talk with workers. He said police officers surrounded members of the group and told them they had to leave the property. Esdaile said he plans to file a complaint with the police department.

Windsor police have been working with the FBI and state police to try to identify those responsible for the nooses, the first of which was found at the site last month. A \$100,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the identification of the culprits.

Gov. Ned Lamont called the nooses "racist provocation of the worst type." "I can tell you that I'm talking to Amazon," the Democratic governor said at an unrelated news conference about the coronavirus Wednesday. "We're doing everything we can from a security point of view, everything we can from a law enforcement point of view. But I can't change people's hearts and it just breaks my heart that this is still going on."

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