

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Pressure Mounting on Cambodia to respect Workers' Rights

Brussels, 20 January 2014 (ITUC OnLine): Pressure on Cambodia's government to respect workers' rights is mounting, with the ITUC, Global Union Federations UNI and IndustriALL and 30 major retail and garment companies calling on Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to launch an investigation into the killing and wounding of striking workers on 2 and 3 January, and to respect fundamental workers' rights, including freedom of association, and set up a proper process for setting the minimum wage.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary said, "With big global brands from Adidas to Walmart calling for action jointly with unions, Cambodia's government needs to fix the broken system which has left workers no option but to take strike action. Failure to do so will mean continued suffering for workers on poverty wages, and do immense damage to Cambodia's lucrative export industry."

"The authorities must release the workers detained earlier this month immediately," she added.

During a gathering on 19 January to call for a minimum wage increase and the release of the 23 detained workers, yet another was arrested. Sokchhun Oeung, Vice President of the Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA), was later released.

The joint letter from the international union bodies and multinational companies calls on the government to:

- Ensure full accountability of security force members found to have used excessive force;
- Respect the rights of those detained;
- Respect the right to freedom of association, and stop legal action against unions whose members participated in strike action;
- Introduce a legal framework that respects ILO Conventions 87 and 98; and,
- Honour its previous commitments to institute a methodologically sound process for determining the minimum wage.

"Cambodia's garment industry is worth more than US\$5 billion annually. It's time the workers who produce that wealth get their fair share, and that the government fulfills its responsibility to protect workers' rights and establish a sound industrial relations system. The local garment employer group GMAC must also change its shockingly negative attitude to the legitimate demands of working people and their unions," said Burrow.

Read the joint statement with IndustriALL and UNI: <http://www.industrialunion.org/global-unions-and-30-major-brands-call-on-cambodian-government-to-investigate-deadly-violence>

Read the letter from global brands and global unions: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/joint-letter-from-global-brands>

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