

Sent Via Email

24 April 2014

To Relevant Representatives of Brands Sourcing Cambodian Garments,

We the undersigned organizations are writing to you as representatives of the major global apparel brands invested in the Cambodian garment sector to request your attendance as observers this coming Friday, April 25th, at the Phnom Penh Municipal courthouse where the trial of the 23 trade union leaders, activists, workers and bystanders who have been detained in CC3 prison since their arrests in January will take place.

Events since January in Cambodia has seen unprecedented levels of violence, abuse of the rule of law and retribution in what has been a consistent, full on assault on trade union and worker rights. This has been characterized among other examples, by the shooting of almost 50 workers during strikes in the garment sector in January, resulting in the deaths of 5 and the injuring of over 40. To date, there has been no independent investigation of these events, impunity for those involved and not a dollar in compensation to those affected.

These months have also seen lawsuits against trade unionists and dismissals in the hundreds in the garment sector; calls by the industry on the government to recant on ratified ILO conventions, no progress whatsoever on a much needed living wage for garment workers and the imprisonment of 23 trade union leaders, workers and others in CC3 .

The cases of these 23 have seen repeated procedural and human rights abuses since the detention began, including refusal of access to lawyers, refusal of medical care as well as repeated denial of release on bail on health grounds for some of those detained. The conditions in which these 23 have been detained have been exceptionally harsh and procedural irregularities have even included discussions over issues as fundamental as whether these accused would even be permitted to attend their own trial as recently as last week.

There have been repeated calls by international labor and human rights groups for the release of these 23 individuals since their detention began in January. Almost four months later, we are on the eve of a trial which will determine the fate of these 23. The outcome of this trial, one way or another, will have enormous consequences we believe on industrial relations in the country's most important sector, your industry, the garment sector. As stakeholders with enormous influence in Cambodia's economy we request that you demonstrate your level of seriousness in resolving this ongoing crisis in the Cambodian garment sector by observing the trial of the CC3 detainees this coming Friday. For those of you who have representatives on the ground here in Cambodia or in the region we ask , that along with representatives from the UN, various Embassies and international human rights/labor groups, that your representatives physically attend the trial as observers. For those of you whose organizations do not have regional or locally based representatives we ask that you communicate to the Government of Cambodia, your ongoing monitoring of the trial and its outcome as well as acknowledge the importance of due process and the rule of law to ongoing investment confidence in the Cambodian garment sector.

Signed,



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