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## **Thousands of Cambodian workers at Adidas shoe factory strike in battle to improve working conditions**

Yesterday, over 5,600 garment workers supported a strike at the Can Sports shoe factory in Samakki Meanchey district, Cambodia, a supplier to global sports brand Adidas. Over 1000 workers rallied outside the factory, blocking the road.

The workers presented a list of 35 demands which have been accumulating over several years and include payment of delayed wages and overtime, as well as a series of demands concerning access to food vendors to address hunger and exhaustion experienced by workers during their shifts. The factory has, today, agreed to some of the workers' demands and as a result workers have agreed to return to work, but other demands, including those regarding wages, remain unresolved.

Adidas' Workplace Standards claim that suppliers are required to "*recognize and respect the right of their employees to join associations of their own choosing and to bargain collectively.*" However, agreement by the factory to address part of the workers' demands only came after union leaders were arrested and required to sign agreements with local authorities by thumb print stating that they would not carry out any further activities that would cause "unrest" in the factory.

Patrick Lee, legal consultant at the Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL) in Cambodia, said: "*This is union busting, plain and simple. Adidas claims to respect workers' rights, and yet a series of violations has taken place at one of their supplier factories leading to strike action and three union leaders have been arrested. This is a clear example of authorities trying to intimidate union members and leaders in the hope of stopping workers from demanding their rights. Adidas needs to take immediate action to support workers' rights and ensure something like this never happens again.*"

This case is yet another in a string of offences linking Adidas to unjust treatment of garment workers. Despite [clear evidence](#) to the contrary, just two weeks ago at Adidas' Annual General Meeting, the company falsely claimed that all garment workers in their supply chain who were made redundant during 2020's Covid lockdowns received full severance payments. A [comprehensive assessment](#) of 114 factories conducted by trade union federations in Cambodia shows that in just one country workers sewing for global brands were deprived of roughly \$109 million in wages during April and May 2021. Among the brands sourcing from the factories in this sample, Adidas was linked to the largest wage theft. In another example, workers laid off from Adidas' supplier Hulu Garment in Cambodia at the start of the pandemic, are still owed 3.6 million USD.

Union leaders in the global Pay Your Workers-Respect Labour Rights campaign are calling on Adidas to negotiate and sign a binding agreement on wages, severance, and freedom of association. The Pay Your Workers campaign is backed by dozens of garment worker unions in major apparel producing countries, as well as labour rights organisations such as the Clean Clothes Campaign and Worker Rights Consortium. So far, Adidas has refused to meet with the unions on this matter.