



CENTER FOR TRADE UNION & WORKERS SERVICES (CTUWS)

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In Samanoud Textile... Workers without Rights and with No Crimes

Workers of Samanoud Textile continue their strike action for the 20th day. They hold on to their right to implement the minimum wage which the President approved. However, the management of the Company escalated its procedures against workers by suspending ten of them and referring them to a disciplinary investigation. The ten workers are Hesham Ibrahim Al-Saied Al-Bana, Mohamed Saber Mahmoud Al-Helew, Mohamed Sedeiq Al-Bastawissi Al-Khamary, Tamer Ragab Oqeil Al-Dagla, Hamdy Zein Al-Abedeem Ibrahim Shaboon, Hamed Al-Sayed Mohamed Al-Gohary, Samah Mohamed Al-Sayed Al-Masadi, Hend Farouk Mohamed Abdel-Aal, Nour Mohamed Hassan Abou El-Naga and Soad Abdel-Hamied Abdel-Moneim Al-Eryan). Moreover, August wages of all workers were withheld although they were paid to security personnel.

It has to be noted that the ten suspended workers include the eight workers who were arrested pending investigations in case no. 7648 for the year 2024 (Samanoud) by the East Tanta Prosecution Office.

The imprisonment of worker and unionist Hesham Al-Bana means that security forces still intimidate workers. In the meantime, workers are still suspended from work. This means that their dismissal decisions will be presented later to the court. This is the same scenario that took place with the workers of Universal Group, Iceman, BituNil, Lord, etc. This reveals a deliberate intent to punish workers for protesting and demanding their legitimate rights.

The Appellate Court of East Tanta, held in Council Chamber on Sunday the 1st of September, decided to release seven of the workers of Samanoud Textile on bail of 1000 َEgyptian pounds each. The only worker who was not released is Hesham Al-Bana, the former president of the Union. The situation of the released persons, as well as Hesham, is pending investigations in the case.

Security forces arrested Al-Bana and seven other workers on the dawn of Sunday the 25th of August including three women. They were forcibly disappeared and held incommunicado for days. They were later presented to the Public Prosecution, which suddenly decided to imprison them for 15 days without notifying their lawyers.

**Egypt/Cairo El-Monira, 30 Elmobtdyan street, crossing El-Falaky street. Second floor,
apartment 21,25**

Tel: +20 27908785- Mobil: +20122 0532 488

E-mail: ctuws.ctuws@gmail.com,

Website: <http://www.ctuws.com>

The Public Prosecution charged striking workers with obstruction of business, inciting other workers to obstruct business, and causing losses to the Company, in addition to attempted dismantling of the ruling regime. These are serious charges that may jeopardize the future of these workers, and lead them to prison for a long time merely for seeking their livelihood.

The arrest of these workers was also full of flagrant violations. According to eyewitnesses, security forces took Al-Bana blindfolded and handcuffed in front of his family members. Women workers were taken in their nightgowns. One security man slapped the son of one of the workers, who is a minor below the age of 18 because the boy clung to his mother. Several other violations are contradictory to the law, the Constitution, and relevant international Conventions.

Many of the imprisoned workers suffer from chronic diseases, like Samah Al-Masadi who has rheumatoid arthritis and security apparatuses refused to allow her medications leading the woman to have a blood clot in detention. The other two women who were imprisoned have diabetes and hypertension.

Workers resorted to strike as a legitimate means of protest after the management refused to negotiate with them for months. The Company claims to be incurring losses. However, it refused to allow workers to form any trade union that would be able to view the information of the company including profits, and represent workers in any negotiation.

The crisis began when the management of the Company surprised workers, who had been demanding the implementation of the minimum wage since May, that there was an intention to give the company to a new investor. This pushed workers to escalate before the supposed acquisition process, whose terms and conditions are unknown, takes place. They wanted the Company to apply the minimum wage before they were moved to a new management, rather than leaving their fate uncertain.

Public authorities, including the Ministry of Labour, ignored the demands of workers. So, workers had to resort to strike. Security forces responded in the usual manner it does with labour protests in recent years.

The response of the management was to issue a bulletin stating that the incentive would be raised to 200 pounds per worker and 100 pounds per one of the administrative staff in a clear refusal to apply the official minimum wage.

The average wage in Samanoud Textile is 3500 Egyptian pounds for a worker who has been in service for more than 20 years. This includes all benefits and incentives, while the basic wage without incentives is below 2000 Egyptian pounds. There are 550 workers, men and women, in the Company.

The majority of the Company's workers are women (more than 320 workers). Most of these women are the sole providers of their families, or they have husbands who are irregular workers which means that women in most cases are the main supporters of the family.

We feel very sorry for the deteriorating conditions of workers. We also condemn the violation of their rights, oppressing them using security threats, easily charging them with fake accusations, and abusing the tool of provisional detention to punish them. We also warn against the outcomes of these practices that will lead to nothing but the deterioration of the rule of law and the threat of social peace and stability.

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