



## **CENTER FOR TRADE UNION & WORKERS SERVICES (CTUWS)**

**Honored the French Republic's Human Rights Prize**

### **When will the Intimidation of Workers Using Security Interventions Come to an End?**

#### **Security Forces Arbitrarily Arrest Ten Workers.**

#### **The Strike Action of Samanoud Textile Workers Continues.**

The strike action of the workers of Samanoud Company for Textile continues for the 11<sup>th</sup> day. Workers protest the refusal of the management to treat them equally to workers of other public sector companies regarding the minimum wage. Meanwhile, security forces have arrested ten workers, including four women, in an arbitrary and illegal manner on the dawn of Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of August.

What is happening to the workers of Samanoud Textile is a repeated scenario since the announcement of the President that the minimum wage will be increased to 6000 Egyptian pounds. Whenever workers demand the implementation of this decision, they are faced with refusal and abuse on the part of their companies. Every time, workers become subjected to intimidation and abuse. The situation usually ends with the interference of security forces which charge workers with political accusations that are completely unrelated to their economic demands.

Few months have passed since the violations that were committed against Al-Mahalla workers. We now witness the punishment of the workers of Samanoud Textile Company for the very same reason, which is that they believed the announcement of the Executive Authority that the minimum wage was raised. It has to be taken into consideration that this very minimum wage is not enough in light of consecutive inflation waves that threaten the lives of workers and make them unable to satisfy their basic needs of food, drink, education and health.

Samanoud workers resorted to strike as their legitimate tool to protest after the management of the Company blocked any hope for negotiation and refused to listen to their demands claiming that the Company is making losses. At the same time, the management refused to allow workers to form any trade union that would be able to know information related to the Company including profits, or the identity of those who invest therein although the Company belongs to the public sector.

The crisis began when the management of the Company surprised workers, who have been demanding the implementation of the minimum wage, that there is 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, so that the company implements the minimum wage before they are moved to a new management rather than leaving their fate uncertain.

Public authorities ignored the demands of workers. This includes representatives of the Ministry of Labour as well as Parliament Member Layla Ismail who merely promised to study

workers' demands. So, female workers decided to hold a sit-in for just one night. Nevertheless, the authorities decided to intervene on the next day in a repressive manner by arresting eight workers from their homes, and two other workers were arrested while they were at their shift at work.

According to witnesses that CTUWS contacted to ascertain and verify information (who don't want to disclose their identities to protect their personal safety), workers were intimidated and subjected to violence while they were arrested from their homes in front of their family members. In at least one case, security men took the worker blindfolded and handcuffed behind his back. This is a flagrant violation of the law, the Constitution, and international conventions signed by Egypt.

In fact, and according to witnesses as well, the average wage in the Company of Samanoud Textile is 3500 Egyptian pounds for the worker who has been in service for more than 20 years. This includes all benefits and incentives, while 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 are women). Most of them perform their work on sewing machines. So, they are the reason why the garment factory is still running. Moreover, most of them are the sole providers of their families, or they have husbands who are irregular workers which means that women are the main supporters of the family.

Nevertheless, those women are at the lowest level of the salary scale. They struggled for many years. Some of them have been working in the factory since its establishment. They actually had to go on strike and engage in sit-ins endless times for several demands starting from the demand to receive their wages on time to the demand of equal treatment with other workers in the companies of the public sector when it comes to financial benefits. However, their demands were seldom responded to.

We demand the immediate release of workers detained arbitrarily, and the fulfillment of their legitimate demands. We call for stopping the manipulation of the fate of workers and their children. We also wonder what is the use of decisions announced by political authorities regarding workers if they are not actually implemented without terrorizing or intimidating workers?

### **Names of imprisoned Workers:**

Hend Farouk

Samah Al-Masadi

Hanem Al-Gogary

Hesham Al-Bana

Mohamed Al-Helew

Hamdy Shaboon

Tamer Al-Dagla

Mohamed Al-Tamary

.. and others