

Joint Statement

Respect Union Freedom and Reinstate Mrs. Roearn Kolap at Shengbo Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd Phnom Penh, 12th June 2024

We, a civil society group comprising unions, union federations, associations, and non-governmental organizations committed to promoting human and labor rights in Cambodia, deeply regret the illegal dismissal of Mrs. Roearn Kolab by Shengbo Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd on June 30, 2023. It has been a year since she faced this injustice. The dismissal of Mrs. Kolab, a newly elected union leader, is a severe violation of the right to freedom of association and union organizing, fundamental to protecting workers' rights in the workplace.

On June 28, 2023, Mrs. Roearn Kolab was elected by the workers as the president of the factory union. The entire election process was properly executed in accordance with the procedures of the Labor Law and the Trade Union Law, with notification sent to the company through Cambodia Post. However, just two days later, on June 30, 2023, when Mrs. Kolab went to the administration office to request a day off, she was handed a letter of dismissal by the company, for the reason that her sewing performance was not meeting company requirements. This reason is in contradiction to the actual quality of her work, as she consistently received monthly bonuses for her performance and had never been reprimanded or warned by her supervisors.

Articles 12, 266, and 267 of the Labor Law prohibit all forms of union discrimination, including penalties and termination of employment contracts. Furthermore, according to Articles 67 and 43 of the Law on Trade Unions, elected union leader candidates must receive special protection, and any dismissal must be approved by the Labor Inspectorate. Additionally, Articles 62 and 63 of same Law clearly state that employment contracts for workers involved in union activities cannot be terminated or not renewed due to their union involvement.

Mrs. Kolab started working on April 28, 2023, and was employed for 2 months and 2 days under a fixed-duration contract, which was subsequently not renewed. The use of fixed-duration contracts is a common tactic by factories to deter unionization and discriminate against union leaders through their non-renewal.

We, the undersigned civil society groups, appeal to the Royal Government, through the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, to intervene and urge Shengbo Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd to

reinstate Mrs. Kolab. We also call on buyers to insist that Shengbo Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd end union discrimination and respect trade union rights in the workplace.

For more information, please contact:

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This joint statement is endorsed by:

1. Federation of Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
2. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
3. Cambodian Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
4. Free Independent Trade Union Federation (FUFU)
5. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
6. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)
7. Partnership for Environment and Development (PED Cambodia)
8. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
9. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
10. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
11. Labour Right Supported Union Khmer Employee of Nagaworld (LRSU)
12. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
13. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
14. Cambodian Human Rights Action Coalition (CHRAC)
15. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
16. Asia Floor Wage Alliance
17. IndustriALL Global Union