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Company heeds demands in sportswear factory protest

NATIONAL

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Reporter : Long
Kimmarita

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Sisophon Hong Seng Sportswear Co Ltd consented to nearly all of the demands made by more than 1,000 protesting workers. facebook

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More than 1,000 factory workers who protested at Sisophon Hong Seng Sportswear Co Ltd on Friday have agreed to return to work after the company consented to nearly all of their demands, Banteay Meanchey provincial Department of Labour director Ros Sarom told The Post on Monday.

They had protested against the Thai management of the sportswear factory in Sisophon town's Teuk Thla commune to demand the company obey the Labour Law and respect their human rights.

Sarom said relevant authorities had a hand in ending the protest.

On Monday, Sarom led a mediation session between representatives of both parties and the authorities to seek a resolution.

He said the workers' representatives had outlined their demands in 10 points which included reimbursing wages for previous holidays, installing thumb print machines, providing drinking water, removing restrictions on toilet breaks, paying wages even during blackouts, providing ambulances for work-related incidents and stopping forced extra hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

The company agreed with these demands.

The workers also demanded the removal of the Thai manager and two other Cambodian head administrators, he said, to which the company requested a two month probation period for the three to observe the workers' demands.

The company agreed to send them to court if they fail to comply, he said. However, they said they would review the demand for increased wages, depending on the circumstances.

"Both parties agreed to sign the documents. I am quite satisfied. This is now a modern society – the company should obey the Labour Law, and both parties are willing to contribute to each other's benefit," he said.

The owner of Sisophon Hong Seng Sportswear could not be reached for comment on Monday.

Serei Limeng, one of the protestors, told The Post on Monday that all the workers will return to work as usual.

He said if the company does not obey its side of the bargain, then the protests would begin anew.

"It used to be very stressful. But after the protest, the situation will get better. The company will also keep its promises.

"If they push us around again or if there are any irregular activities, we will continue our protests and submit another petition to the provincial Department of Labour. We have every right to protest," he said.

Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW) provincial coordinator Bun Sothy welcomed the news and expressed hope that the workers' plight would be resolved.

However, he noted that factories tend to persecute protesting workers after the dispute dies down.

He said he will continue to monitor the case, adding that the factory currently does not have a union to protect the workers' interests.

"Usually workers are patient, and unless anxiety levels are high, they will not protest for fear of losing their jobs. We [the CUMW] hope that the workers get a real resolution," he said.



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Post Media Co Ltd
 The Elements Condominium, Level 7
 Hun Sen Boulevard
 Phum Tuol Roka III
 Sangkat Chak Angre Krom, Khan Meanchey
 12353 Phnom Penh
 Cambodia

Tel: Celcard: 078 555 166/ 078 555 133
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



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