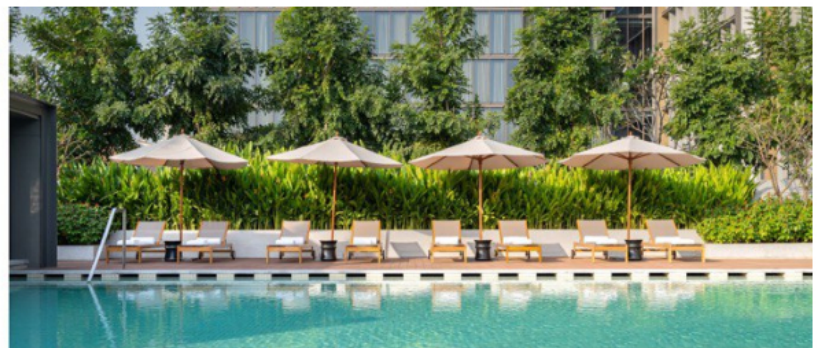


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Catu urges reinstatement of three dismissed unionists

NATIONAL

Publication date: 21 May 2024 12:38:16
Reporter: Long Kimmarita

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The Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (Catu) released a statement requesting that Roo Hsing Garment Co Ltd reinstate three dismissed union officials after the organisation deemed their dismissal unsubstantiated and unfair.

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training's Department of Labour Dispute director Chrun Theravong decided on May 7 to dismiss assistant shop steward and union activist Kon Soch, vice-president of the local factory union Ek Sarun, and secretary of the local factory union Sok Kong, at the request of Roo Hsing Garment.

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Roo Hsing Garment said the employees violated Article 83 of the Labour Law, which prohibits employees from a slew of punishable actions including making threats, committing fraud, stealing and inciting other workers to commit offences.

The statement, dated May 11, said in mid-April Roo Hsing Garment accused the three of formulating a plan to have all employees stop working at the factory on April 9 to pressure their employers into allowing them to take a vacation during Khmer New Year.

It said on that day, workers in the finishing section stopped working for almost two hours.

Catu said their local union was not involved with the work stoppage and the three dismissed employees and Catu members never formed a plan or incited other workers.

It said local union affiliates had attempted to meet with the company to discuss and resolve the case, but the company never exhibited a spirit of negotiating in good faith.

“These terminations will have severe effects on these three workers. Currently, the national economy is facing a decline because of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which will make it difficult for them to find work elsewhere.

“Two of the workers have infant children who need milk and medical care,” the statement said.

Catu president Yang Sophorn told The Post on Tuesday that the union was left speechless when the director of the Department of Labour Dispute of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training had allowed the company to dismiss the three.

She also said Catu would file a complaint with international buyers to persuade them to intervene in the case in addition to filing a complaint with the Minister of Labour.

Sophorn said the documents she received only requested that the employees be suspended, not dismissed. She believes the Department of Labour Dispute overstepped its boundaries in allowing the three to be fired.

Ministry spokesman Heng Sour told The Post on Tuesday that its officials had handled the case according to law, and that the three had incited workers to commit a serious mistake.

He further said if the dismissed union officials were not satisfied with the decision, they could protest it within two months to the Minister, who has the right to cancel or revise the decision.

“[Labour ministry] officials implemented the law and issued the standard letters. Each party has a right to protest the decision,” he said.

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