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Mon Feb 19 2024 15:47:49 GMT + 0700 (Indochina Time)

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## Upset staffers protest lay-offs at capital's waste collection firm

### NATIONAL

Publication date  
30 January 2020 | 22:39

Reporter : Long Kimmarita

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Cintri employees protest the dismissal of 80 of their colleagues without proper compensation. Hong Menea

Some 80 employees at Phnom Penh's former waste collection company Cintri (Cambodia) Ltd on Thursday filed a petition protesting working conditions and seeking Prime Minister Hun Sen's intervention after the firm laid off more than 100 administrative staffers without proper compensation.

Cintri had been the capital's sole waste collection company until last October when Hun Sen ended its contract and removed collection fees from the electricity bill.

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The firm would be temporarily allowed to deal with the capital's rubbish but would no longer be able to collect fees.

According to a directive signed by municipal governor Khuong Sreng last month, rubbish collection fees would be settled online, at Acleda Bank Plc or through e-payment service providers. The aim, the directive said, is to modernise public services and ensure every Phnom Penh resident pays their bill.

The employees have held a series of protests since early this month.

Nhor Buntha, a protester who gathered in front of the firm in Chamkarmon district's Tonle Bassac commune since Monday, told The Post that they would protest until a solution was reached.

He said the protesters had sought intervention from relevant institutions before submitting their petition to Hun Sen. But they were still not provided a solution acceptable to all parties.

"We requested two points – first, we want 100 per cent of our salary, dismissal and seniority indemnity payments and other benefits according to the Labour Law.

"Second, we ask to work at the company run by the Phnom Penh Municipal Hall instead of the current workplace," he said.

On October 22, last year, the prime minister ended the company's contract and handed over its waste collection rights to the municipal hall, which will oversee rubbish collection until there is a bidding process to acquire such rights.

Buntha said there had been no response since they delivered the petition to Hun Sen.

"We still continue our strike. We just want [Cintr] to come forward and address the points we have raised because we don't want to protest on such scorching hot days.

"Some of us even passed out because of the intense heat, but no one has come out to address them at all. Samdech [Hun Sen] has announced that he will not let anyone become jobless or starve. I hope that there is a solution soon," he said.

Neither Cintri director Seng Savy nor Phnom Penh Municipal Hall spokesman Met Meas Pheakdey could be reached for comment on Thursday.

Kong Chamroeun, an official at Hun Sen's cabinet, told The Post on Thursday that he had received the petition and had referred it higher authorities for a decision.

"I have not received any news about it yet. I don't know what measures would be taken to reach a compromise," he said.

Centre for Alliance of Labour and Human Rights executive director Moeun Tola said the matter would end if the company provided them with proper compensation.

He said if the firm does not follow the Labour Law, the relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, are obliged to step in.

"I call on the authorities to speedily find a solution. If the protest continues, it will affect residents and the state," he said.

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