

Geneva, 15 March 2018

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IndustriALL Global Union calls on Gildan Activewear to reinstate five trade union leaders at your Haitian supplier SISA

Dear Mr. Chamandy,

I am writing this letter to you as the General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing sectors throughout the world, including Haiti, to urge your company to intervene with its Haitian supplier Sewing International S.A. (SISA) to ensure the reinstatement with back-pay of five union leaders unfairly dismissed following strike action last year in breach of ILO standards of freedom of association.

As you know, on 19 May of last year, in the wake of a dramatic increase in the cost of living, workers in 22 garment factories in Port-au-Prince -including SISA- went on strike in support of demands for an increase in the minimum wage from 300 to 800 gourdes per day. Further strike action took place on 23 and 25 May.

As a result of the strike, union leaders and workers in five factories – including your supplier – were dismissed. On 26 May, SISA dismissed five union leaders, including three from our affiliate GOSTTRA-CTSP and two from SOTA-BO.

Two of the five factories subsequently reinstated the dismissed workers. In spite of repeated calls to do so, SISA is one of three factories that has refused to reinstate the union leaders.

In fact, from June to August, the company dismissed a further 104 workers, including 25 trade unionists, as a result of an alleged drop in orders.

SISA is participating in the Better Work programme, a comprehensive programme bringing together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect of labour rights for workers and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses. Better Work is a collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group.

Following requests from local stakeholders, Better Work agreed to carry out an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the dismissals. In October, it released a report outlining its findings and setting out a series of recommendations (attached).

In its report, Better Work notes the 'task force' labour inspectors (i.e. inspectors from the garment industry task force which has received intensive training as part of the Better Work's capacity building programme for the Labour Ministry) recommended the reinstatement of the five union leaders. It also notes that there is not sufficient proof to say the workers laid off between June and August were not dismissed as a result of their trade union activities.

Better Work recommends that the company reinstate with back-pay the five dismissed trade union leaders.

It also recommends that the 104 workers laid off between June and August be given priority in rehiring in the event the factory takes on workers with similar skills.

Finally, Better Work recommends in the event of any future collective layoffs that the company inform the authorities and the unions, consult with the unions view a view to avoiding or limiting the number of layoffs, and act on the basis of objective criteria that take into account the interests of both the factory and the workers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that ILO standards are complemented by the OECD Guidelines on Multinationals, which corporations from OECD countries are expected to abide by in their business operations worldwide, as well as the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector which are aimed at avoiding and addressing the potential negative impacts in global supply chains.

I urge you to insist that your supplier act on the full recommendations of Better Work and that in the first instance it immediately rehire the five trade union leaders with the payment of lost wages.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary

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