

INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FUND

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NEW REPORT EXPOSES LABOR ABUSES AT CHINESE SWEATSHOPS PRODUCING FOR WAL-MART

Report Release Coincides with U.S. Speaking Tour of Sweatshop Workers from Around the World, including China

A long list of abuses including illegal wage and hour practices at Chinese factories producing goods for Wal-Mart are detailed in a report released today by the Washington, DC-based International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF) and China Labor Watch (CLW).

“Wal-Mart in China: Rolling Back Labor Rights” focuses specifically on the Winbo Industrial Co., Ltd., located in Guangzhou. Although illegal under Chinese Labor Law, most workers at Winbo are paid less than \$2 a day and they do not receive the overtime compensation of 1.5 times the regular wage as required by law. Pay is often withheld for as long as two months. Workers are expected to work overtime frequently and many workers exceed the 36 hours of overtime maximum limit set in law.

Safety at the Winbo factory is another major concern. Workers report that they are often not given adequate training on operating sheet metal forming machines. They also stated that machines have not been properly inspected to meet national safety standards. As a result, most injuries take place in this section of the factory and the management does not properly compensate workers who are injured.

While there is no union at the Winbo factory, workers have engaged in strikes, especially due to the withholding of salaries. However, lead organizers of strikes are usually fired which is a clear violation of freedom of association.

The release of the report from the ILRF coincides with a speaking tour of sweatshop workers from around the world who produce for Wal-Mart. The tour includes workers from Nicaragua, Swaziland, Colombia and China. Kate Chen from China worked at the Winbo factory in February 2006 producing toys for Wal-Mart. At Winbo, her specific job was to put together colored pencil cases and she earned a mere \$2 a day and had no written contract.

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