



Dongguan union releases response to Yue Yuen workers' demands

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NEW YORK - In an official document released by the Dongguan City Union [\[W\]](#) and obtained by China Labor Watch (CLW), the union laid out its responses to the demands of Yue Yuen shoe factory workers, most of whom have been on strike since April 14. According to this document, the union supports the election of worker representatives and negotiation between the Yue Yuen workers and management.

The union's public support for workers is an important first step in protecting Yue Yuen workers' rights, and CLW hopes that the union can carry out the representative elections as soon as possible. CLW calls on Yue Yuen to participate in collective negotiation with its workers.

The official document also contains responses to worker demands from the Bureau of Social Insurance, the Bureau of Human Resources, the Housing Fund Management Center, and Yue Yuen factory's management. In its statement, the Bureau of Social Insurance explained that the factory must provide past unpaid social insurance to workers.

This official response, requiring that factories provide backpay to workers for past social insurance, creates an important precedent. Unpaid social insurance is a pervasive issue in most Chinese factories, including suppliers to major international brand companies.

CLW's Executive Director Li Qiang said, "Although it did not meet Yue Yuen workers' expectations, this official document explains that according to law, a factory must reimburse social insurance as long as workers demand it. This rule is applicable to all companies that have not fully paid workers' social insurance."

Despite the positive replies from both the union and government officials, it remains to be seen if these measures are fully implemented.

On the last page of the document, Yue Yuen management expressed that if workers did not return to work, the company reserved the right to fire workers for three days' absence from work, effectively forcing workers to return to their jobs.

Despite the Dongguan union's response to Yue Yuen's employees, workers have continued to strike on Thursday.

All workers in Yue Yuen's Old Number Three Facility (老三厂) are on strike. With about 15,000 workers, this facility primarily manufactures products for Nike. Most workers swiped their time cards and then left the factory in protest.

In other facilities, some workers have returned to work while others continue to carry out a work stoppage on their production lines. Because some facilities have locked the doors and restrict workers from leaving after they clock in, it is difficult for workers to accurately estimate how many people located in the production facilities are still participating in the work stoppage.

One worker on the Asics production line said, "The strike has continued. Management is being too forceful about workers returning to work, saying that beginning on the 24th, if workers swipe their cards and then leave, they will be punished according to absenteeism rules. Worker can only carry out a work stoppage sitting at their positions in the facilities in order to protest and demand a reasonable response from management to workers' demands."

Workers making Adidas products said that some Adidas orders had been transferred to Fujian Province while others have been sent to Qingyuan in Guangdong Province. Adidas has stated that it has in fact transferred some of its orders but did not clarify the new location of production.

Workers told CLW that the Yue Yuen factory currently has orders for brand companies that include Salomon, Nike, Asics, Car, Adidas, and more.

CLW reported recently on the detainment of two labor activists, Zhang Zhiru and Lin Dong, who had assisted Yue Yuen workers during the strike. On April 23, Zhang Zhiru called his wife, explaining that he would return home in a few days.

+1-212-244-4049 | clw@chinalaborwatch.org
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