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## At Mattel Toy Supplier, Hundreds of Workers Protest for Unpaid Wages and Benefits

Friday, August 7, 2015

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK - From Monday to Thursday, hundreds of workers of the Dongguan-based Ever Force Toys and Electronics Company have demonstrated and petitioned authorities for unpaid wages and benefits after factory ownership ran away, workers told China Labor Watch (CLW). Large numbers of riot police and K-9 units have been deployed to put down the workers' protests, and about 20 workers remain in police custody as of Thursday evening.

Owned by the Ever Force Group in Hong Kong, the Ever Force Toy factory in Dongguan has been certified by ICTI (International Council of Toy Industries) and is a major supplier to Mattel Toys.

Via on-site interviews, workers told CLW that on August 3, they learned that the company "boss" had run away, leaving workers with three months of unpaid wages and four months of unpaid insurance contributions. Workers immediately carried out a work stoppage.

The next day, Ever Force workers marched on the Shipai Township Government building, holding a banner that read, "Give my hard-earned money". Workers said that the authorities responded with violent suppression, the police tearing the banner and beating workers.

On August 5, workers carried out a sit-in at the Ever Force factory gate, blocking the entrance, and preventing the transportation of goods. Workers said that the government consequently dispatched hundreds of police along with K-9 units to suppress the demonstration and prevent workers from leaving the area.

Workers had not been paid by Ever Force for three months. The government initially decided to offer workers 70 percent of the unpaid wages. On August 5, the government agreed to raise that amount to 90 percent. But workers demanded the full amount.



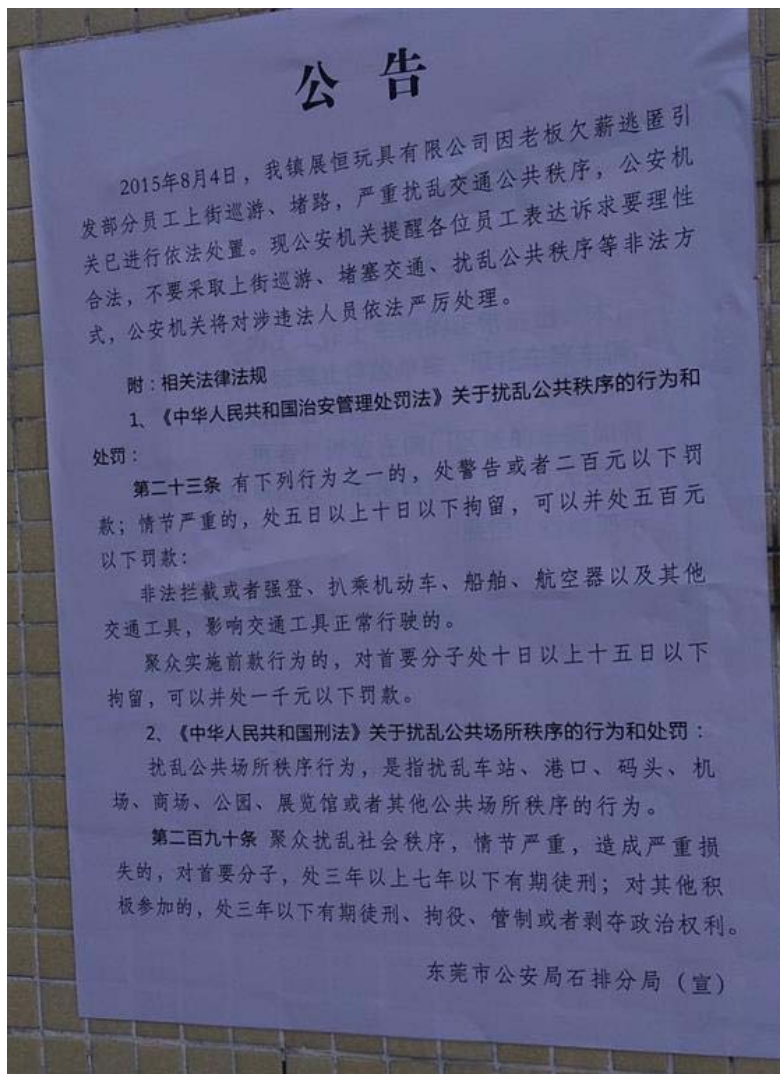
*Heavy police presence as Ever Force workers protest. (social media)*

Workers protested again on August 6. Authorities this time called on a large number of riot police to put down the demonstration, arresting about 20 workers in the process. As of the evening of August 6 (Beijing time), these workers remain in police custody. Workers said that the Shipai township government has told workers that the release of these 20 people is contingent on workers accepting a final offer of 90 percent of unpaid wages. Some workers have already accepted the offer.

Remaining workers said that they do not want to “give a discount” on their labor. Some have been employees of Ever Force for 20 years. In addition to 100 percent of their unpaid wages, workers demand unpaid seniority wages and social insurance contributions. Workers said that when they went to the local social security department to check their records, there had been no insurance contributions for four months, despite Ever Force deducting the individual portion of insurance contributions from workers’ monthly wages.

Workers said they have already reached out to the Guangdong Provincial Branch of the ACFTU (China’s only permitted union federation) and local media to no avail. A number of workers representatives even went to the Communist’s Party’s Dongguan Municipal Party Committee office to make an appeal, but workers were unable to enter.

The Shipai Police Station posted a notice in the factory on August 4 warning workers that they would be fined up to 1,000 RMB (\$161) or more, and jailed for up to seven years, for disturbing public order, as stipulated by China’s Public Security Administration Punishments Law and Criminal Law.



Notice from the Shipai Police Station. (CLW)



*Riot police and K-9 units surrounding Ever Force workers. (social media)*



*Riot police. (social media)*



*Police holding down a protester. (social media)*



*A worker bleeding. (social media)*



*Workers blocking the road. (social media)*



*Ever Force workers protesting. (social media)*



*Ever Force factory. (CLW)*

#### About China Labor Watch

Founded in 2000, China Labor Watch is an independent not-for-profit organization. For more than a decade, CLW has collaborated with labor organizations and the media to conduct in-depth assessments of factories in China that produce toys, bikes, shoes, furniture, clothing, and electronics for some of the world's largest brand companies. CLW's New York office creates reports from these investigations, educates the international community on supply chain labor issues, and pressures corporations to improve conditions for workers.

#### Contact

(For English)

Kevin Slaten

Program Coordinator, China Labor Watch

E-mail: [clw@chinalaborwatch.org](mailto:clw@chinalaborwatch.org)

Phone: +001 212-244-4049

147 W 35 St Ste 406

New York, NY 10001

(For Chinese)

Li Qiang

Executive Director, China Labor Watch

E-mail: [clw@chinalaborwatch.org](mailto:clw@chinalaborwatch.org)

Phone: +001 212-244-4049

China Labor Watch | 147 W 35 St, Ste 406, NYC, NY 10001

+1-212-244-4049 | [clw@chinalaborwatch.org](mailto:clw@chinalaborwatch.org)

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