



Rights for Working Women ELVIRA, FILIPINO MOTHER: UNFAIR WORKLOAD AND



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RESISTANCE TO UNION ORGANIZING

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Elvira, Filipino Mother: Unfair workloads and resistance to union organizing

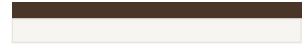
THIS STORY IS PART OF ILRF'S MOTHERS' STORIES SERIES. EVERY DAY BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY, A WORKING MOTHER AROUND THE WORLD WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED. To read other stories, click here.

My Name is Elvira Panis and I am 40 years old. I am married with 5 children. I work at a garment factory as called Tigerways Facilities and Resources Company in Caloocan City, Philippines. I work as a sewer for 10-12 hours a day, depending on the demand from buyers. I work this job because sewing is the only thing I know how to do. My salary is paid weekly and is based on rate of production. On an average day I get up at 4:00am and prepare breakfast for my family and get my children ready for school. Breakfast is at 6:00am. After the meal, I prepare for work, with my husband. At 6:30am I leave for work. I start work at 7:00am and finish at 6:00pm. At 6:00pm I go to the market to buy food for dinner. From 7:00-9:00pm I help my children with their homework and do their laundry for school the next day. At 10:00pm I go to sleep.

My salary does not cover my expenses. We are allowed maternity leave from work as required by law. However, temporary workers will lose their jobs if they fall pregnant. We are not treated with respect at the workplace. The workload is not always fair. Men are always promoted ahead of women. I am in the process of organizing a union but am met with constant resistance and threats that management will close down the factory. Since the global, economic crisis 108 workers have been temporarily laid-off. However, I believe the company is using the global economic crisis as an excuse. Tigerways was a top rank company last year and yet they still implement temporary lay-offs. There is another batch of around 340 workers that will be laid-off very soon. The total number of Tigerways employees before the lay-offs was 879 workers.

The hardest times at work are when our workload is so high that we cannot finish in time. We then face disciplinary action which usually results in illegal dismissal. If I could change two things in the work place it would be to end the abuse of workers by management and regulate the high quotas of work and minimal leave.

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) conducted this interview through its partner organization, the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL). APL is a trade union that also incorporates other labor organizations into its strategy of social movement unionism. It seeks to protect the rights of all workers and not just wage earners, striving for social transformation. Founded in 1996, APL was a reaction to inequality and the need to break the barriers between blue and white collar workers that undermine so many trade unions.



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