



## February 2015 Labor News Special Brief: Unhappy Holidays for Chinese Workers

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China will celebrate the Lunar New Year on February 19, and as the date approaches tens of millions of migrant workers are heading home for the holiday. Unfortunately, what should be a joyous occasion is frequently marred as business operators in the red who have promised their workers payment for months of backlogged wages before the holiday are unable or unwilling to keep that promise and flee, leaving hundreds of workers penniless after having worked months with no pay. This unfortunate phenomenon causes the period prior to the Lunar New Year to be a particularly high period for labor unrest, as workers cheated by their employers take to the streets to demand compensation.

Just how widespread is this problem? In the last week alone, dozens of strikes over unfurnished wages and disappearing bosses have been reported, each affecting hundreds of workers. A few recent examples of Chinese workers striking for wage arrears are provided below:

- February 3 - Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province - Thousands of construction workers protested in front of a government building over unpaid wages. (Source [🔗](#))
- February 3 - Nantong, Jiangsu Province - The entire Fujiayi Electronic Factory went on strike to demand wages. (Source [🔗](#))
- February 3 - Chifeng, Inner Mongolia - Construction workers halted a tunnel project to demand their due compensation. (Source [🔗](#))
- February 3 - Yongzhou, Hunan Province - Construction workers building a rural power grid strike to demand their wages be paid. (Source [🔗](#))
- February 3 -, Bijie, Guizhou Province - Workers launch a protest aimed at their employer, the Wansheng Investment &

Development Company, over its failure to pay wages. (Source [↗](#))

The foregoing incidents are a mere drop in the ocean of strikes going on across China right now over employers who have failed to pay wages for months on end and are no going back on promises to do so before the New Year holiday. Blogger [wickedonna](#) [↗](#), who tracks incidents of unrest, recorded 193 separate cases *on February 3 alone*, a marked increase from usual. These incidents are also getting more attention from global media as their frequency makes them hard to ignore. The [Wall Street Journal](#) [↗](#) points out, for instance, that construction workers have been particularly affected by this failure to pay wages as the Chinese housing and construction industries continue to slow. Unfortunately, workers getting cheated out of compensation before the holiday has only grown worse with each year.

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