



CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN



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May 12, 2006

Support the illegally dismissed worker Nisa in Madagascar

Dear friends

We are contacting you to ask for your support for Nisa, a workers' representative at the Cote Sud factory in Madagascar that is producing trousers for Gloria Vanderbilt (owned by Jones Apparel). Nisa was dismissed in September 2004 after being on sick leave, and has been fighting against this injustice since.



Please find below a short history and some background on the case, steps taken towards the buyer Jones Apparel to date and an action request.

Nisa needs your support!

June 20, 2006, UPDATE, [Settlement reached in Cote Sud case >>](#)

Illegal dismissal of workers' representatives at Gloria Vanderbilt producing factory in Madagascar

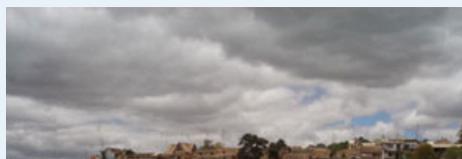
Mrs Sabine Razafindranisa (Nisa) worked more than nine years for the factory Cote Sud, producing trousers for Gloria Vanderbilt (owned by Jones Apparel). Nisa was a workers' representative, chosen by the workers to represent them before the management. Since then, the management made her life difficult in the factory. She was forced to do overwork - sometimes until 4 o'clock in the morning - even when an official medical certificate stated that she shouldn't work more than 10 hours a day. Early 2004, after having told the Mauritian management they had to follow the Malagasy law, she received a warning and was sent away for 7 days. Returning to work, Nisa was demoted from section supervisor to working in line, folding trousers. A demotion she has opposed until today by filing a complaint with the Malagasy Ministry of Labour.

On the 22nd of September, 2004, she had to go to the hospital for 10 days. Although she had proof and had a valid reason for her absence, she was subsequently dismissed by Cote Sud. In Madagascar, the Ministry of Labour has to approve dismissals of workers' representatives, and the Ministry refused to approve this dismissal. They ordered the factory to reinstate Nisa, but the factory refused and till today continues to ignore the Ministry's order even after being reminded by the Ministry in September and December 2005.

Around the same time, another workers' delegate, Mrs Saholy Rakatoarisoa, who also had a medical certificate attesting her absence, was also dismissed for being absent.

Background information

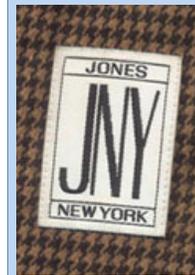
The Cote Sud factory is producing 100% for Gloria Vanderbilt. Since 2002, Gloria Vanderbilt is owned by Jones Apparel Group (US).



June 20, 2006, UPDATE

Settlement reached in Cote Sud case

After nearly two years of trying to get her job back, the illegally-dismissed workers' representative Sabine Razafindranisa ("Nisa") has settled her case with the Cote Sud factory in Madagascar. [Read more >>](#)



Nisa was fired at the Cote Sud factory in Madagascar that is producing trousers for Gloria Vanderbilt (owned by Jones Apparel).

The Cote Sud factory has a practice of dismissing workers when they are sick or pregnant. When workers fall ill while working, they are regularly refused permission to go to the doctor. The factory keeps workers on temporary contracts, contrary to the law, so that they can pay them less over a long period of time. Overtime is compulsory in this factory, and workers are regularly made to work through the night. The workers are paid per piece, but the piece price is often too low to make enough money during normal working hours. Therefore workers are forced to work overtime. The management refuses to discuss this. The food in the canteen, on which the workers depend for their meals, is often late and not very good. The sanitary supplies are not sufficient, and workers do not have any break from work. Workers are afraid to be active for a union, seen the fact that Nisa was dismissed from the factory and hasn't received her salary since September 2004.



Workers from garment factories in Madagascar during their lunch break

CCC contacting Jones Apparel Group

On the 3rd of November, 2005, the Clean Clothes Campaign wrote a letter to Jones Apparel Group asking the company to take responsibility for making sure Nisa got reinstated and for improving the labour conditions in the factory. After an initial positive response, the company has stalled and evaded responsibility, thereby tolerating that Cote Sud again requested the Ministry of Labour to approve Nisa's dismissal. After being pressured to take action, Jones Apparel responded that the factory would abide by whatever the Ministry's decision may be.

On the 27th of December 2005, the Ministry of Labour again refused to accept the dismissal and asked the factory to reinstate Nisa by the 12th of January 2006. Despite the fact that since that date Nisa has been going to the factory every fortnight, the management refuses even to talk to her, not to mention to reinstate her.

Subsequently, Jones Apparel Group was asked again to take immediate action to make sure that the factory reinstates Nisa. However, Jones Apparel has for a long time been evasive.

Saholy in the end settled with the Cote Sud management for a salary of two months severance pay, having to endure hardship because of the lack of income. As Nisa made very clear, she does not want to negotiate for a settlement and wants justice to take place.

After being pressed by CCC, Solidarity Center and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR,) Jones Apparel commissioned a social audit at Cote Sud, being done by Africa Now. This means that Jones finally started a process of investigation into the workers' rights violations at Cote Sud, but unfortunately the question of Nisa's reinstatement was again evaded. Moreover, the outcomes of the social audit are so far not shared with the above-mentioned NGOs or the local stakeholders.

CCC keeps insisting that the most urgent matter is the reinstatement of the workers' delegate Nisa. This is a very important issue now as workers at Cote Sud have communicated that they are still as afraid as before to become an active union member, due to the dismissals of anyone daring to speak out about workers' rights at the factory.

June 20, 2006, UPDATE, [Settlement reached in Cote Sud case >>](#)

Take action now

Speak out on mother's day, and demand the reinstatement of Nisa at Cote Sud.

- Take some time today to send a protest message to Jones (find a sample letter below).

Please send a copy of any responses you receive to the Clean Clothes Campaign

Dear Desta Raines,

I'm writing to you to express my concern regarding the situation of Mme Sabine Razafindranisa, a workers' representative at the Cote Sud factory in Madagascar that is producing clothes for your company. I have been informed by the Clean Clothes Campaign that Mme Sabine Razafindranisa has been illegally dismissed in September 2004 and since then has been campaigning to be re-instated at the factory.

I have been informed that Mme Sabine Razafindranisa was elected as a workers' representative following Madagascar law. She addressed workers' rights issues, and was therefore disciplinary punished by the factory management. When she fell sick she was demoted and then dismissed, although she could show official medical certificates to prove her absence. As you know, the Malagasy Ministry of Labour has refused to accept the dismissal at two separate times. Therefore I am very surprised that notwithstanding this clear official judgement, the factory management has till today refused to reinstate Mme Sabine Razafindranisa.

I understand that efforts have been made to convince the factory management to settle the matter, but that so far this has not been successful, and that CCC and other labour rights groups have contacted you over the past month and asked you to firstly make sure Mme Sabine Razafindranisa will get reinstated under, at minimum, the terms of her previous employment and that her back wages will be paid and secondly ensure that the Cote Sud factory is in compliance with international acknowledged decent working conditions, among which the right to organize.

I am very disappointed to learn that still no advancement has been made towards reinstatement of Mme Sabine Razafindranisa. Given the fact that she didn't receive any salary since September 2004, the situation is very urgent. I know that Jones Apparel has been sourcing at this factory for some time and that you are the only substantive client of the Cote Sud factory. I therefore urge you to use your leverage to get Mme Sabine Razafindranisa reinstated.

Please let me know what steps you will take to ensure this,

Sincerely



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TELL A FRIEND



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