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Benzinga: Walmart Silent as Suppliers Cheat Factory Workers

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WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

Wake Up Walmart is calling on Walmart to make certain their suppliers are not stealing from their employees. Factories in Bangalore, India that make clothes for Walmart and other apparel companies have refused to pay the legal minimum wage to approximately 125,000 workers since the minimum wage was increased one year ago, according to a report released today by the Worker Rights Consortium and being touted by United Student Against Sweatshops.

According to the report, the factories owe the workers more than one month's back pay and citywide, the Bangalore apparel workforce is owed more than \$10 million dollars.

Walmart's South Asia procurement and vendor compliance operations are headquartered in Bangalore and the company is a major purchaser from one of the biggest offenders cited in the report.

Walmart says it requires compliance with local laws, including minimum wage laws, in its Standards for Suppliers and audits factories which export to Walmart as part of its Ethical Standards Program.

This information follows reports of Walmart's failure to promote even the most basic of labor standards in supplier factories in China as detailed in a November 25, 2009 China Labor Watch report.

As the largest retailer in the world, Walmart has set the moral low ground when it comes to making sure the factory workers who produce the goods sold in their stores are properly paid for their work. It is especially telling that such ethical violations take place in the backyard of their regional compliance office.

We call on Walmart to ensure that the workers in the Bangalore factories where their products are produced are immediately paid the back wages they are owed.

Any "ethical standards" program that Walmart has talked up is clearly just public relations and doesn't reflect their business practices. That Walmart has chosen to ignore minimum wage law in India demonstrates a larger pattern of trampling on workers' rights on a world-wide scale.

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