



6,000 Chinese workers strike over drastically reduced wages at a Crocs and New Balance factory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK - Thousands of workers at the Ciyu Shoe Factory in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen have been on strike from March 10 to March 12 over suddenly reduced wages, and based on worker interviews conducted today by China Labor Watch (CLW), they will continue their action until workers receive economic compensation.

According to workers, until recently the Ciyu Shoe Factory manufactured products for New Balance. But after a production shift to Crocs shoes, workers' monthly wages suddenly dropped from about 4,000 RMB (\$650) to 2,000 RMB (\$325). Workers are not sure exactly what caused the sudden reduction in wages, but they suspect it may be a way to force more workers to resign.

More than 2,000 workers have been at Ciyu for at least five years, and more than 1,000 have been working at the company for more than 10 years.

On Monday, March 10, about 6,000 workers began striking for economic compensation. The worker representatives were arrested, and the angered workers continued the strike on March 11, on which more strike leaders were arrested. Only when workers reacted intensely to these arrests did officials set the representatives free.

On March 12, workers marched together to the Shenzhen Longgang District Government carrying a yellow banner that spelled out their demands. Once they reached the District Government, the workers sat in protest. About 100 public security personnel were dispatched to the site, where they blocked, filmed, and hit workers.

Workers told CLW that they did not want to select any more worker representatives to carry out negotiations because they feared they would be arrested, just as strike leaders had been arrested on the previous two days.

While protesting in front of the District Government, it began raining and workers opened umbrellas. Security personnel yelled at workers to get on government-provided buses to return to the factory, but the protestors refused to use the buses. Despite security personnel telling them over and over to get on the buses, the workers eventually marched themselves back to the factory, a walk of more than one hour.

Workers told CLW that if the company or government does not meet workers' demands, then the action would continue.

*** UPDATE (March 19, 2014)

According to follow-up interviews with workers by CLW, among the workers who went on strike last week, there were workers who produced Brooks brand shoes. Through the ongoing strikes, workers were able to negotiate with the factory for better wages. The factory agreed to give workers the same wage levels as they had previously. Ciyu also agreed to give compensation to workers who decided not to continue working at the factory, but the compensation level may not be in accordance with China's labor law. Workers said that the factory has returned to normal operations since Monday this week. ***



The Ciyu Shoe Factory



Workers protest in front of the Longgang District Government

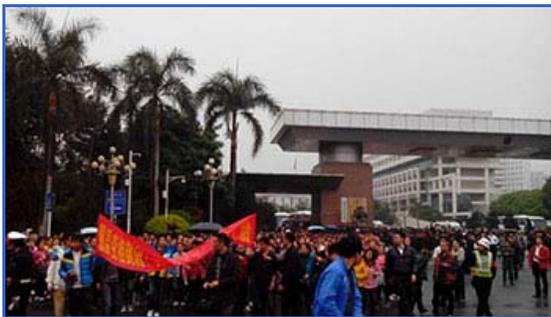
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Workers sit in protest in front of the District Government



Public security personnel were on the scene



Workers protested in front of the District Government



Security personnel take the banner from the protesting workers



Even after it began raining, workers opened up their umbrellas and continued the protest



Brooks brand shoe manufactured at Ciyu



Police officers film one of the protesting workers



Police officers demanded the protesters to return to factory