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GEORGIA FAIR LABOR PLATFORM

Fair Labor Platform expresses solidarity with striking employees of ‘Georgian House’

The Fair Labor Platform stands in solidarity with the striking employees of Georgian House Ltd., and considers the dismissal of employees during the strike to be illegal and a gross violation of the fundamental right to strike.

According to information provided by the Trade Union Youth Movement, Georgian House Ltd. employees were unable to report for work in early October due to salary delays, prompting the company to tell employees that they would be fined 49% of their salaries the following month. After receiving their salaries, the employees returned to work. At the same time, 30 employees filed a collective labor dispute with the company, citing labor rights violations such as late pay, unpaid overtime work, restricted leave, harsh working conditions, an unreasonably high system of fines, and more.

Georgian House Ltd. refused to meet the demands of the employees, and the mediation process ended without an agreement between the parties. In addition, the company fired four employees involved in the mediation process, and once again reduced the salaries of some employees by 49%.

The salary of some employees at Georgian House Ltd. is around 500-600 GEL, which is already well below the government □□ reported average monthly earnings in Georgia. The use of salary reduction sanctions further aggravates their situation, especially in the context of the Coronavirus-related economic crisis.

Some employees have also reported that Georgian House Ltd. further reduces their salaries to offset the value of returned or expired products. The Fair Labor Platform believes that this case is another example of an exceedingly common unfair labor practice in Georgia: companies deducting perceived □□□□□□ A from employees □ salaries, without establishing a causal link between the damage and the employees □ actions. This practice often results in a significant reduction of employees □ monthly income, and also makes their income highly unpredictable.

According to the Trade Union Youth Movement, Georgian House Ltd. employees announced the start of their strike on November 9 in accordance with the requirements of the Labor Code. The company responded to the strike by firing an additional 13 employees. The company said the reason for the dismissal was a repeated, unannounced absence from work – clearly referring to the strike.

Under the Labor Code of Georgia, a strike is not a legitimate ground for termination of employment. The company □□ actions are thus a gross violation of labor law, and set an extremely dangerous precedent.

Finally, we note that the staff of the Georgian House Ltd formed a primary trade union as soon as the mediation process began, and the company was aware of this process as soon as the collective dispute began. Accordingly, the dismissal and fining of some of employees involved in the mediation process and the subsequent dismissal of striking employees may constitute discrimination on the grounds trade union membership, which is also a gross violation of the Labor Code.

Based on the above, we call on:

- The Ministry of Labor of Georgia to ensure timely and effective negotiations between the parties through the mediation process, which is one of the most important mechanisms for fair dispute resolution and restoration of employees' rights.

Signatory organizations:

The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

New Confederation of Independent Unions (NCIU)

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Solidarity Network

Social Workers' Union of Georgia

Open Society Georgia Foundation

The Independent Trade Union of the Transport Company "Ertoba 2013"