



H. E. Hun Sen  
Prime Minister  
Phnom Penh  
Kingdom of Cambodia

Madrid, 10<sup>th</sup> of January of 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), a majority trade union in Spain, I write you to condemn the violence perpetrated by members of the police and armed forces against striking garment workers.

In December 2013, the government announced a new minimum wage increase, one that fell far below a living wage. The original offer of \$95 (now \$100) per month is truly insufficient to satisfy the basic needs of any Cambodian worker. It is also incompatible with Article 104 of the Cambodian Labour Code, which guarantees the payment of a wage that "must ensure every worker of a decent standard of living compatible with human dignity".

Workers decided to withhold their labour on 24 December, as is their fundamental right under international law and the Cambodian Labour Code, to agitate for a higher minimum wage. Instead of negotiating with workers, the government decided to resort to violence and intimidation. Heavily armed police and soldiers have repeatedly mobilized in recent days to quash the protests, leading to violent and bloody clashes. To date, at least four workers were killed and 39 injured. Over 23 have been arrested, and the whereabouts of some remain unknown. Summonses for questioning have been issued for additional union leaders.

CCOO calls on the government to immediately stop the violence, to release all arrested workers, to ensure provision of medical treatment for the injured and to return to the bargaining table, with the representatives of workers and employers, to reach an agreement on a just minimum wage for the textile and garment industry. As a member of the ILO and having ratified ILO Convention 87 in 1999, the government must also respect the right of unions and workers to exercise their right to freedom of association, including the right to strike, without threat or intimidation.

There is no question that the conduct of the authorities constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights, including freedom of association. We await your immediate action to restore industrial and social peace based on respect for fundamental human rights.

Sincerely,

**Montserrat Mir Roca**  
International and Cooperation Secretary CCOO