

SUPPLIER STUDY

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Workers' voices about Asian Sourcing





ASIAN SOURCING

SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND LABOUR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

ASIAN SOURCING INTERNATIONAL (ASI)

ASI operates headwear production plants in Jiangsu Province as well as trade and customer services in Shanghai. We screened two factories:

- Jiangsu Asian Sourcing,
- Huaian Yuantong Headwear

ASI's Jiangsu plants are large compared to the Shanghai offices and represent the Group's main production sites. Throughout the past seven years workers have been complaining about unlawful wage deductions, wage arrears, forced and unpaid overtime, sexual abuse, and corruption. The information provided in the following section covers the time Jan. 2015 - May 2016.

GENERAL FINDINGS

- Alleged rights violations were published at various social media platforms.
- There are hints on systematic corruption schemes, despotic management, managers demanding sexual favours from workers, forced labour, excessive and unpaid overtime, discrimination, and sexual abuse.

CORRUPTION & EMBESSLEMENT

In May 2017 an employee at Jiangsu Asian sourcing published a post indicating that there is a systematic corruption scheme going on. The post has been censored and even the cached version was deleted. We only could recover the first few lines:

When I came to the Lianshui hat factory everything seemed to be quite all right. But slowly I learned some things that people are not supposed to know. Inside the official factory, there are many sub-branches. The accountant, one person, is a subsidiary. The factory head and the accountant collude and create fake worker accounts [...][lianshui_15]

Earlier, in April 2016 it is claimed that a few factory managers at Jiangsu Asian Sourcing began to run their own small-scale workshops. Apparently, they diverted assignments from the regular factory floor to their own businesses. Substandard products were brought back to the factory, where the workers have been forced to mend the damaged goods as unpaid overtime work. [lianshui_3]

STRIKE & RESISTANCE

At another forum workers discuss the same issue. According to these voices, regular workers earned significantly less because there were less pieces to do. It is stated that a manager began to replace incumbent factory workers with her own employees. The workers tried to confront the manager with this problem but without success. Exhibit 1 was posted to document the discussion. [lianshui_7]

SEXUAL ABUSE & DISCRIMINATION

A manager identified by name and workshop number was accused of despotic behaviour:

"[...] At the factory he keeps a few young girls. He pushes people around and forces everybody who has been there for more than ten years to leave. [...]" [lianshui_6]

In 2015 there have been complaints about harassment. Allegedly workers were forced to work in short sleeved t-shirts when the workshops were freezing cold. [lianshui_13]



Exhibit1: Angry workers at Jiangsu Asian Sourcing

WAGE & OVERTIME

In November 2016 workers employed at Jiangsu Asian Sourcing and Huaian Yuantong tried to receive attention from the local labour bureau (a local government entity overseeing labour and union law implementation).

"The Lianshui hat factory at the industrial zone opposite of Shangshui, doesn't respect workers' rights to rest. Sundays there is no rest and we work every day until around 9 o'clock. We are constantly threatened with getting fired. How can there be so little respect for the labour law in a socialist country?" [lianshui_1]

Also at Shangshui Yuantong headwear, we are working every day until 9 o'clock. No rest on Sundays. I really cannot stand it. When you ask for a day off they deduct money. Where else are these kind of rules still practised? You are completely left alone and suffer in silence. Every day you get up as early as a rooster and go to bed as late as a dog. [lianshui_1]

BONDED LABOUR & OTHER VIOLATIONS

In December 2016 workers claimed that both factories did not pay overtime fees. Workers who wanted to quit faced repression and wage deductions.

You don't dare to quit, and it's also not allowed. If you do it any way you won't get your salary. No matter whether there is something to do or not you have to work until 11 o'clock. It feels like slavery; that is today's Yuantong hat factory! [lianshui_2]

After one month of bitter overtime work you look at your payslip and just want to spit blood. Why do the relevant authorities not care about this exploitation of workers in Lianshui? When I began to work here I was told that usually there is no overtime. Only when they have to ship goods there is a possibility. In fact, I work 30 days a month, every day there is overtime until 9 or 10 o'clock (including red days). But this is not reflected on the pay slip, which only accounts for 20 hours of overtime fee. [lianshui_2]



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