

SUPPLIER STUDY

GLOBALWORKS | JUNE 2017



Workers' voices about Grown Up Group





Exhibit 1: Workers' protest at Binhao Bag factory in 2016

GROWN UP GROUP

RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE COURSE OF MULTIPLE FACTORY RELOCATIONS

GROWN UP GROUP IN CHINA

Grown Up Group specializes in bags and related products. The company runs production facilities in Guangdong Province and Jiangxi Province. We screened two factory sites:

- Binhao in Dongguan
- Pinghu Wenhua in Shenzhen

We screened social media for the period Jan. 2015 – May 2017.

Workers describe the labour and living conditions at Grown Up as relatively bad. In 2016 workers at both factory sites engaged in large-scale protests and in one case the confrontation culminated in violent clashes with the police.

GENERAL FINDINGS

- Grown Up Group relocated two factories (or at least parts of it) without giving prior notice. Workers were not informed about their legal right to compensations. Grown Up Groups secret relocation strategy caused anger, shock, and eventually culminated in protests and blockades.
- Allegedly, workers were offered jobs at wages below the minimum rate.
- There are claims that wages and contracts are withheld.

STRIKE & RESISTANCE

Binhao Bag factory in Shenzhen was relocated to Dongguan. According to a worker's social media post, machines and materials were disassembled and loaded onto trucks. When workers asked what was going on they were told that the company was replacing old machines [binhao_1].

As word went out that the factory would relocate, workers protested with sit-ins and demonstrations. Exhibit 2 is a snapshot of a video documenting workers protests [binhao_2]. The video was censored.

The banner on exhibit 2 states: *"The evil boss of Binhao is relocating the factory but [last not readable]."* The worker who posted this picture asked for public support for their cause. The post was removed [binhao_1].

Related to the relocation of Binhao Bag factory in Shenzhen are a number of posts on legal network sites where workers ask for advice what to do. The issues raised indicate that workers

were not properly informed about their right to compensation [binhao_soliciter_1-3].

WAGE & OVERTIME

Allegedly workers not willing to move to Dongguan were offered to stay at the Shenzhen plant at a reduced wage of RMB 1600. This would be a violation of workers' rights given that the offered salary is below Shenzhen's minimum wage of RMB 2030 (benchmark for 2017).

BONDED LABOUR & OTHER VIOLATIONS

A worker made the following allegations in 2017: "[...] every day every night we have to work overtime, but do not get paid for that. They keep two months wages as a deposit. They do not allow you to quit and if you leave anyway two months of salary are gone. Apart from that you do not get your contract when you start working there. The leaders are cheating us and do not take responsibility. When something happens they will ask their subordinates to solve the issue."



Exhibit 2: Protest banner at Binhao Bag factory

STRIKE & RESISTANCE AT WENHUA

According to a social media news post, about 400 workers at Wenhua Daily Necessities factory blocked the main gate when the management began to remove office equipment and other assets. Workers were informed that the company would relocate with immediate effect. Workers were shocked and angry. The police came in to restore public order (see exhibit 4) [pinghuwenhua_1].

On a lawyer network website a worker was asking for advise on behalf of several hundred employees who did not receive compensation from Wenhua. The employee also mentioned that many of them got beaten when the management called in the police [pinghuwenhua_soliciter].

Earlier, workers have evaluated Shenzhen-based Wenhua as a comparatively bad work place. Besides low wages and authoritarian management it was stated that living conditions at the dorms are substandard as there are only commonly shared showers and charging (mobile phone) batteries was not allowed [pinghuwenhua_3].



Exhibit 3: Violent protests at Wenhua in Shenzhen



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