

Complaint – Fristads Kansas Group, Solo Invest SAS – Bangladesh

Status: under investigation

FWF is responsible for setting up a complaints procedure in production countries where FWF is active. The complaints procedure allows third parties to make complaints about the working conditions or the way the Code of Labour Practices is implemented in factories which supply FWF members.

The responsibility of FWF includes investigating the complaint, verifying whether the agreed corrective action plan is implemented and public reporting. This complaint report gives an overview of a complaint filed to FWF, the investigation and agreed corrective action plan as well as how the outcome is verified. For more information on the complaints procedure see the FWF website. FWF also publishes an overview of complaints received in its annual reports.

1. Affiliate involved

Fristads Kansas Group

Solo Invest S.A.S.

2. Accused party

A shared supplier of both affiliates located in Bangladesh

3. Date of receiving complaint

13 January 2016

4. Filing party

29 employees (5 floor level supervisory staff and 24 production workers) that are recently under suspension of the factory.

5. The complaint

The complainants claimed that they have been under suspension of the factory since 6 December 2015. The factory pressed charges against 11 out of 29 complainants. According to the complainants, the factory charged them for setting off unrest among the workers in November. The complainants said that the suspension and the charges were unfair. They believed that they should be reinstated or compensated for the suspension.

According to the complainant, the new management of factory had allegedly misbehaved towards the employees. The following issues were reported to FWF's complaints handler:

- Denying access to drinking water during working hours
- Severe verbal abuse
- Unpaid overtime
- Unfair dismissal of a floor level management staff

The employees had filed a complaint to the local authority in November. In response to the case, the local authority issued a notice requesting the factory to remove non-compliances, including issues regarding payment of minimum wages, OT premium, drinking water, contract (appointment letter) and misbehaviour of a management staff. As the management did not resolve the issues, there was a protest by the workers in the factory against the management in November 2015.

The details of the above allegation are not clear and not verified. FWF is in the process to gather more information.

6. Admissibility

FWF decided that the case is admissible on 14 January 2016.

The factory is an active supplier of two affiliates of FWF – Fristads Kansas Group and Solo Invest SAS.

The case is relevant to the following labour standards of FWF's Code of Labour Practices:

- Payment of a living wage
- Reasonable working hours
- Occupational health and Safety
- Legally binding employment relationship

7. Investigation

FWF informs Fristads Kansas Group and Solo Invest S.A.S about the case. Fristads Kansas Group had visited the factory in February 2016 and discussed with the factory management about the case.

The management informed Fristads Kansas Group that it had conducted an investigation on its own and concluded that it was justified that the workers were fired. According to the management, the internal investigation showed that the complainants had stirred up unrest among the workers and damaged factory properties during the protest. The factory decided not to drop the case against the complainants. It would not reinstate the fired workers. The factory was open for further investigation by FWF.

The complainants informed FWF that they did not agree with the investigation procedure and the findings of the factory management. They had decided to seek justice through local authority. They had filed a case to labour bureau of the district government.

FWF and the complainants agreed to wait for the investigation and conclusion of the local authority. At the moment no investigation is organised by FWF.



8. Findings and conclusions

The case is under investigation.

9. Remediation

The case is under investigation.

10. Verification

The case is under investigation.

11. Evaluation by the complainant

The case is under investigation.