



Improving working conditions in the global garment industry

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Day 230 in the picket line: Esprit involved in Hey Tekstil severance case



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Hong Kong-based brand Esprit was a big buyer from the Hey Tekstil factory in the months before closure last February. An estimated 80-90% of the clothes made at Hey Tekstil in Turkey were for Esprit. Sacked workers are still waiting for back wages in the picket line in Istanbul.

Mehmet Zeki Gördeğir speaks on day 230 of the picket line about his persistence to get what he is owed: 'After working at Hey Tekstil for over ten years I was fired from my job. Since that time I have been trying to get what is due to me. Hey Tekstil still owes me one month's salary and severance payments. My brother is supporting my family and our parents. I said I will continue to fight with my friends until I get what is my right. None of us wants to be on a picket line for more than 230 days, but with the support and solidarity of the people, I will stay until the end.'

Mehmet Zeki Gördeğir is one of over 2.000 workers who have been fired over the last months. Collectively they are owed at least 4.7 million euros in unpaid salaries, legally-mandated severance and notification payments. For over eight months, groups of workers have protested in Istanbul in front of the Li&Fung, Hey Tekstil and other places. Hong Kong based Li&Fung, one of the world's largest garment trading companies, was sourcing almost all of the production at Hey Tekstil for one brand: Esprit.

We thank all of you who sent messages to Li&Fung's chairman, demanding Li&Fung take responsibility and action to deliver justice to Hey Tekstil workers. Unfortunately, to date, Li & Fung refuses to take action.

That is why CCC is now reaching out to Esprit, who state this is Li&Fung's responsibility and that they must



Workers in the picket line remind Esprit and Li&Fung about their code of conduct

provide a solution. Esprit and Li&Fung both have codes of conduct that state wages and benefits should be paid in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Let us be very clear. Going around in circles, playing a blame game with other parts of the supply chain is in violation of the UN Business and Human Rights guidelines. Wage violations at Hey Tekstil had been going on for many months prior to closure, and both companies clearly failed in their due diligence and in their obligation to mediate. These two companies all profited from the labour of Mehmet Zeki Gördeğir and other Hey Tekstil workers. They now should clean up the mess together. The Hey Tekstil workers are only asking to be paid what is theirs by law.

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