



June 25, 2007

HE Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
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Dear Honorable President Macapagal-Arroyo:

On behalf of Canada's Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), I am writing to urge your government to immediately launch an impartial and independent investigation into alleged attacks and death threats against striking workers at the Chong Won Fashion, now known as C. Woo Trading, garment factory in the Cavite Export Processing Zone, and to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of those workers and an end to any further violence or threats of violence against the workers and organizations providing them advice and support.

Recent reports MSN has received allege that at 8:30 p.m. on June 10 nine men armed with crowbars and knives arrived at the Chong Won picket line in a white closed van with license plate number UBD-390 and with "Rapid Air Freight" written on the side of the vehicle. The picketers were reportedly held at knife point while the men dismantled their makeshift tent shelters. The attackers reportedly threatened the picketers that if they didn't abandon their strike and the company, they would be killed.

When asked by the picketers what jurisdiction the attackers had to dismantle their picket line, one of the attackers reportedly stated, "We are paid two million pesos to demolish your strike." The attackers reportedly challenged the strikers to call the police.

The second attack reportedly took place at 3:30 a.m. on June 11. According to the picketers, around 20 men wearing balaclavas to hide their identities and armed with M-16 rifles reportedly arrived at the picket line in three vehicles. One of the vehicles, a black pick-up, reportedly had the license plate number WTH-196. According to reports from the picketers, the armed men rounded up the strikers in one corner of their vehicle and ordered them to lie face down while they pointed the barrel end of their rifles at the strikers' heads. They then reportedly threatened to kill the strikers one by one if they were still on strike later that morning. Some of the armed men were reportedly wearing military fatigue pants.

After the armed men left, the strikers reportedly went to the PEZA police station to report the attacks, but were reportedly told that the police could not assist them and would not conduct an investigation because tomorrow (Monday) was a public holiday. They then attempted to report the attacks to the National Police station in the municipality of Rosario, but were reportedly denied assistance, allegedly because the EPZ was out of their jurisdiction.

According to the strikers, shortly after the second group of armed men left the picket line, the PEZA police set up two checkpoints to prevent the re-entry of strikers to the area in front of the factory.

Based on the above reports, we are extremely concerned about the safety of the Chong Won strikers, as well as the safety of labour rights advocates who have been providing them support and advice.

We are also very concerned about the alleged failure of the PEZA and National police to investigate the two incidents, the allegations that PEZA police attempted to prevent the strikers from returning to the picket line rather than pursuing the attackers, the allegations that the attackers were paid to destroy the strike, and the alleged failure of the PEZA police to prevent a group of heavily armed men from entering and exiting the export processing zone and attacking the strikers.

We would therefore strongly urge your government to immediately launch an impartial and independent investigation into these incidents and to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of the Chong Won (C. Woo Trading) strikers and labour rights promoters who are providing support to those workers.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynda Yanz', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lynda Yanz, Coordinator

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