

Indonesian garment workers continue to fight company violence

Terry Cook
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The *World Socialist Web Site* last month published an appeal for support for garment workers at the Japanese-owned PT Impian Busana, in Surabaya, Indonesia, who are fighting the company's attempts to victimise workers who played a prominent role in a strike early in May for improved working conditions and wages.

The WSWWS has received further correspondence thanking us for our support and reporting new levels of management violence and intimidation, with the complicity of local authorities and police.

The letter reports that workers who were active in the strike were transferred to a part of the factory known as the “manual machine” section, which is notorious for its repressive working conditions. The worn-out machinery used in the section puts an enormous strain on workers and undermines their health.

The management has traditionally used transfers to this section as a form of punishment and to create the conditions to force workers to resign. In recent weeks the management transferred 15 women to the section.

The letter describes a brutal assault on three women who refused to be transferred and who attempted to stay in their old section. It says: “The Japanese manager—Mr Tokyo Shimada—helped by security guards and staff from the personnel department, picked up the workers by the hands and feet, dragged them and threw them out of the factory gate. One worker experienced terrible pain throughout her whole body.

“On the same day, May 10, the management sent a letter to each of the workers' parents informing them that their daughters were irresponsible and they disobeyed their superiors. The parents were asked to come to the office of the company ‘to settle the problems of their daughters’.”

The day after the assault the workers held a rally outside the East Java Provincial Assembly in Surabaya

to protest against management violence, forced transfers and dismissals. The protesters were told to seek the assistance of the local government official in charge of labour affairs and to report the assault to the police.

On May 12 the workers who were assaulted, accompanied by two witnesses and 22 other workers, went to the local police to report the incident. The officer in charge registered the complaint but told the workers to return on May 15. When they did so, they were asked to furnish money to pay for a doctor's examination to establish medical proof of their injuries.

When they said they did not have any money the police took them to the local health care facility in Puskesmas. By this time it was very late and the health centre had closed. The police then said the workers would be taken to the police hospital but demanded money for the transportation. When the workers refused the police informed them that, “it was now useless for them to be examined by a doctor because the bruises caused by the violent action would have already vanished”.

However, the workers persisted in their complaint and returned to the police station on May 17. After being kept waiting for a long time they were told it “was useless” to continue their action.

The letter says: “They (the workers) were blamed for not filing a complaint immediately following the assault. The police also blamed the workers for refusing to be transferred. According to them, management had the right to transfer workers wherever they want.”

Later in the month the police visited one of the workers at the boarding house where she lived and attempted to pressure her to withdraw her complaints against the company.

Despite the increased repression the workers at PT.

Impian Busana are continuing to defend their rights and fight for improved working conditions. They are calling for workers around the world to support them.

Messages of support can be faxed to: 62-31-598 1579
or emailed to: ayuni@sby.centrin.net.id



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact