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Unpaid factory workers seek PM's intervention

NATIONAL

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Reporter : Long
Kimmarita

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The protest was organised because the factory allegedly terminated contracts without just cause and refused to pay employees.  Heng Chivoan

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More than 100 factory workers were intercepted by the authorities on Wednesday in the capital's Por Sen Chey district as they marched to Prime Minister Hun Sen's house to request him to intervene in negotiations with their employer, who has not paid them.

The protest was organised because Hana Cambodia Inc allegedly terminated contracts without just cause and refused to pay their employees as promised.

Ouk La, a Hana factory protester, told reporters that the company declared bankruptcy and agreed to five points of compensation for employees who were terminated.

However, she said the factory later committed to only three of the five points, which caused about 400 workers to protest on June 23.

"The salary was not paid as promised on June 30. According to our negotiations, the factory and the ministry [of Labour and Vocational Training] agreed to the five points, but now they are only committing to three of them.

"We want Samdech Hun Sen to help resolve this issue and guarantee all Hana factory workers the other two points according to the law.

"We have worked in that factory for many years. We will face a lot of difficulties. Those of us who are pregnant will not be hired anywhere else," La said.

Sokhom, another Hana factory worker, said the march to Hun Sen's house was unsuccessful because district authorities stopped the workers and asked them to resume their negotiations locally.

District governor Hem Darith said authorities stopped the march because it could affect public order.

He said two of the five points are still being debated and concern seniority payments for employees who worked at the factory for five to 10 years. These workers have requested at least \$1,000, Darith said.

Phearum, another worker involved in the negotiations said the talks had not been successful because the factory was still refusing to offer the two points they had promised.

He said all workers would still protest for Hun Sen's intervention.

"The negotiations are hopeless. The factory still refuses to deliver what they promised, even though it was not affected by Covid-19.

"When we were working, we had overtime. When the Covid-19 crisis arrived, they used it as an excuse to terminate contracts and avoid their responsibilities," he said.

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