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IHLO-HTUR/JS

28 August 2008

**Trade union repression and labour rights violations at Ole Wolff**

Dear Mr. Wolff,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation I am writing to you in connection with the ongoing dispute and longstanding reports of trade union repression and labour rights violations at the Ole Wolff (Yantai) factory in Yantai, Shandong Province.

The ITUC has been informed by several sources, including domestic media information that the Ole Wolff Yantai plant has failed to comply with Chinese labour laws which require employers to provide labour contracts to workers; has paid workers with wages under the local minimum wage levels and continues to deny its workers the right to set up a workplace union without management interference and has instead retaliated against workers involved in the Ole Wolff (Yantai) trade union by dismissing them. We are also alarmed at the reports of the extensive harassment and threats towards union members and officials.

We further understand that Ole Wolff Yantai has not complied with a local court decision requiring Ole Wolff to reinstate dismissed workers. The Yantai Labour Bureau and the Yantai City Intermediate People's Court passed verdicts in 2006 and 2007 respectively, which clearly ruled that the Ole Wolff (Yantai) Co. Ltd's dismissal of six workers' representatives in 2006 was unlawful and that the company should continue to fulfil the labour contracts of these six workers.

The ITUC fully supports the demands of the workers at Ole Wolff Yantai, including the recognition of the officially registered trade union and its members, the immediate end to



the harassment of any union members, the complete compliance with local labour laws, the reinstatement and adequate compensation of the six dismissed workers, the return to dismissed workers of their employment history files which have been reportedly illegally held by the Ole Wolff Yantai management as well as the payment of any legally due union fees and the consultation of workers on any substantial change in production plans which may affect workers' employment as directed by Chinese labour laws.

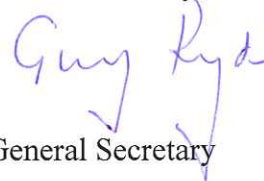
The ITUC has been in correspondence with 3F, LO (the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions - LO Denmark), as well as the Hong Kong branch of Ole Wolff management. We understand that Ole Wolff management in Denmark has met with the Danish trade union 3F but Ole Wolff has reportedly stated that while they "do not know the whole truth about what is happening", they "are 100 percent convinced that the employees have very good pay and working conditions", making no response to the very serious legal repercussions of labour rights abuses. This attitude is very disappointing considering that the factory in question (Ole Wolff Yantai) is 100% owned by Ole Wolff Asia (in HK), which is in turn owned by Ole Wolff holding. A request for a meeting with the Ole Wolff Office in Hong Kong by the ITUC and Global Unions Office in Hong Kong has so far gone unanswered.

The ITUC would like to emphasise that the right to organise is an internationally recognised human right protected in the Universal Bill of Rights and more specifically in ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Right to organise.

The international trade union movement believes that your company has a strong interest in addressing these serious matters, which could tarnish the image of your company at home and abroad, should they remain unaddressed. The ITUC therefore urges Ole Wolff management to take immediate steps to ensure that Ole Wolff (Yantai) behaves in accordance with domestic Chinese laws as well as taking steps towards the immediate rectification of existing labour rights abuses including the reinstatement of the six dismissed workers and the provision of adequate wages and working conditions and respect international human rights of its workers.

We look forward to your immediate attention to this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary

Cc.: Yantai Labour Bureau  
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