



ECONOMY

# Court Announces Asset Auction at Factory Embroiled in Yearlong Dispute

Khut Sokun | Wed Dec 16, 2020 7:06 pm



Factory workers gather for a strike at the Dignity Knitter factory in Kandal province on January 17, 2020. (Sok Sreysros/Supplied)

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The Kandal Provincial Court said two factories' assets would be auctioned, as workers have camped outside the factories every night seeking compensation amid a labor dispute that has been ongoing for a year.

More than 1,000 workers at the Dignity Knitter and Eco Base factories in Takhmao city faced late payments since December last year, and in January said they had witnessed company management taking away equipment. So a group of workers began standing guard outside the factories 24 hours a day, taking turns sleeping in makeshift quarters. The factories were formally closed in April.

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On Tuesday, following lengthy court processes, the Kandal Provincial Court announced that the remaining assets of the two factories would be auctioned on December 29 with a minimum bidding price of \$1,777,000.

Court spokesman So Sarin said the auction would help repay the money owed by the factories, without specifying the creditors.

Seang Yout, dispute resolution officer at the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union, said 1,226 workers were owed a total of \$1.91 million for their final salaries, annual pay, lack of notice, damages and seniority remuneration.

Yout added that the union would monitor the auction to make sure it is transparent.

A workers representative, Phin Sophea, said he hoped there would be enough money raised to compensate all workers.

“If [the equipment] is sold and there’s not enough to settle, we won’t agree,” Sophea said, explaining he feared that only a part of the factories’ assets would be put up for sale.

Factory representatives could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

Suor Socheat, 40, who worked at Dignity Knitter for 16 years, said she was happy to hear the court’s decision.

She said she had faced many difficulties over the past year, making ends meet and sleeping outside the factory amid rain.

“If the auction of the company’s equipment cannot compensate all workers, I will continue to protest,” Socheat said.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, hundreds of factories have suspended their operations or closed down, with the employers’ association saying mid-year that 150,000 jobs in the sector had been affected.





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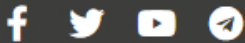
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