

*-Press Release-*

A report documenting critical conditions at a Wal-Mart supplier is released.

In the coming July, Wal-Mart is planning to release its annual social responsibility report using various approaches in an attempt to portray itself as a socially responsible and ethical company. However, the public has been well aware of Wal-Mart's hypocritical behavior for decades. The report on Hantai, a shoe supplier to Wal-Mart that employs more than five thousand workers, reinforces the message that rather than spending millions on product advertisement and creating reports with faulty information that have the potential to fool the public, Wal-Mart needs to address and reform working conditions.

Based on the findings at Hantai and workers' testimonies the factory puts its best and only interest in manufacturing while disregarding its workers' affairs.

Among the findings at Hantai, there were accounts of workers experiencing compulsory overtime, and workers who refuse to work overtime being denied overtime for a whole month, an approach that reduces workers' overall wage and ultimately intimidates workers into compliance with the factory's orders. At the end of each month, workers receive inadequate premium and are asked to sign a fake pay stub to deceive clients. Moreover, Hantai mandates accommodation on site, and deducts a dormitory fee from all workers except married workers, who are allowed to live offsite. The environment in the dormitory is so poor that theft occurs frequently in the dormitories. In addition, due to the limited training that the factory provides, workers often unaware of the risks they may encounter at work, accounting for the high work injury rate at Hantai.

Though conditions described are those of just one factory, it draws into question conditions in other Wal-Mart supplier factories. The case of Hantai factory is only the tip of the iceberg, for a handful of suppliers manufacturing goods for Wal-Mart share similar conditions.

Wal-Mart's disregard for workers' plights simply cannot be tolerated by. Wal-Mart has a responsibility to enforce its Code of Conduct among its contractors everywhere, not just in China. It has the ability to ensure that its workers are treated fairly. To emphasize the importance of this matter, CLW offers assistance to reporters who are interested in learning more about Wal-Mart's supplier behind the scene and wish to interview the workers. We believe that this is the only way to have workers' voice be heard by the international community and push Wal-Mart to enforce its code of conduct.