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| Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LStelephone: 020 7636 4030 fax: 020 7636 0632 [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk/)General Secretary: *Frances O’Grady* Assistant General Secretary: *Kay Carberry CBE*Assistant General Secretary: *Paul Nowak* |  |
| His Excellency Mr Nambora HorAmbassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary The Royal Embassy of Cambodia 64 Brondesbury ParkWillesden Green London NW6 7AT | our ref cambodia/fog/otdate: 11 January 2014contact: Owen Tudordirect line: +44 (20) 7467 1325email: otudor@tuc.org.uk  |

Dear Ambassador

Respect Workers Rights in Cambodia

On behalf of the Trades Union Congress, the national trade union centre for Great Britain, and the six million trade unionists we represent, I would like to inform you or the shock and horror we felt at the violence perpetrated by members of the police and armed forces against striking garment workers in Pnomh Penh earlier this month. We express solidarity with our sister trade union organisations in Cambodia and their struggle for a living wage.

In December 2013, your government announced a new minimum wage increase, one that fell far below a living wage. The original offer of $95 (now $100) per month is truly insufficient to satisfy the basic needs of any Cambodian worker. It is therefore incompatible with Article 104 of the Cambodian Labour Code, which guarantees the payment of a wage that “must ensure every worker of a decent standard of living compatible with human dignity”.

Workers decided to withhold their labour on 24 December, as is their fundamental right under international law and the Cambodian Labour Code, to agitate for a higher minimum wage. Instead of negotiating with workers, the government decided to resort to violence and intimidation. Heavily armed police and soldiers have repeatedly mobilised in recent days to quash the protests, leading to violent and bloody clashes. To date, at least four workers have been killed and 39 injured. Over 23 have been arrested, and the whereabouts of some remain unknown. Summonses for questioning have been issued for additional union leaders.

The TUC calls on your government to stop the violence, to release all arrested workers, to ensure provision of medical treatment for the injured and to return to the bargaining table in good faith, with the representatives of workers and employers, to reach an agreement on a just minimum wage for the textile and garment industry. As a member of the ILO and having ratified ILO Convention 87 in 1999, the government must also respect the right of unions and workers to exercise their right to freedom of association, including the right to strike, without threat or intimidation.

The actions of your government have clearly caused grave concern both to the UN and the British Government, as well as organisations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the trade union movement here and around the world. There is no question that the conduct of the authorities constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights, including freedom of association and assembly.

I would be grateful if you could convey our protests to your government, and I would be grateful if you would see a trade union delegation to put these points to you and hear your response in person.

We await your government’s action to restore industrial and social peace based on respect for fundamental human rights, and a just settlement on wages for garment workers in Cambodia.

Yours sincerely



**FRANCES O’GRADY**

General Secretary