

India: Maruti Suzuki Manesar Workers: Resisting Caste Violence - Facing Brutal Repression

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PRESS RELEASE: 19 July, 2012, New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki Manesar Workers: Resisting Caste Violence - Facing Brutal Repression: The present spate of violence at the Manesar plant of Maruti Suzuki as a fallout of a protest by workers against a casteist comment made by a supervisor at a dalit worker reflects the continuing use of 'caste' as a method of subordination and oppression reflecting the persistence of deeply rooted primordial structures of society that complement capitalist exploitation. When co-workers protested, the management suspended the abused worker and refused to re-instate him and instead resorted to brutal violence, orchestrated by goons, against the workers and targeting the union leaders.

It is important to note that the Maruti Suzuki management is yet to constitute the Grievance Redressal Committee and the Welfare Committee at its Manesar plant which was agreed upon after the last dispute in October 2011. The present dispute is a well planned instigation by the management to systematically derail the ongoing negotiations on the Charter of Demands submitted by the Maruti Suzuki Workers Union in April 2012 and to discredit the sustained and united struggle of the workers at the Manesar plant.

The New Trade Union Initiative condemns the use of wanton violence by the Maruti Suzuki management to suppress workers' protests in defence of their human and democratic rights and disrupt the union. The NTUI also condemns the manner in which the Government of Haryana and the Gurgaon police have consorted with the Maruti Suzuki management by arresting over 100 workers including union leaders and key activists without conducting due investigation and pre-supposing that the workers are solely responsible for the violence. This position of continued support to the Maruti Suzuki of the Government of Haryana demonstrates the lack of political will to protect workers in the state despite its own Labour Department initiating proceedings against Maruti Suzuki for violating the provisions of signed agreement of October 19, 2011 at its Manesar plant.

NTUI demands that the management of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. -

- Immediately lift the illegal lockout at the Manesar Plant
- Immediately and unconditionally reinstate the suspended worker
- Withdraw all false criminal charges filed against workers with the Haryana Police
- Respect the Right to Association and negotiate in good faith with the democratically elected Maruti Suzuki Workers' Union.

NTUI demands that the Government of Haryana

- Immediately Stop the arbitrary and motivated arrests of workers and union leaders by the Gurgaon

police without following due investigation and release all workers arrested so far.

- Immediately declare the lockout at the Maruti Suzuki India Ltd's Manesar Plant to be illegal
- Initiate Prosecution proceedings against management of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. for gross violation of the agreement of 19 October 2011.
- Ensure that companies operating in the State of Haryana respect the laws of the land including laws that protect the rights of workers.

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