

Solidarity for KPTU-TruckSol Drivers' Strike in South Korea: Pulmuone - 'Wholesome Foods' hide Unwholesome Deeds

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Pulmuone Drivers' Strike

Since 4 September KPTU-TruckSol members have been striking against the large Korean food goods company Pulmuone (overseas branches in Japan, U.S., China). Pulmuone drivers joined KPTU-TruckSol last year, because they could no longer bear the 20-year long freeze in rates, long hours and unsafe driving conditions forced on them by Pulmuone. After two strikes, they won an agreement with the company, which promised to respect their union and continue to negotiate to improve conditions.

Now, Pulmuone is not only not respecting its past agreements, it is also trying to force workers to sign a new agreement forbidding them from identifying their vehicles as union trucks (essentially revoking union recognition) and levying huge penalties on those who disobey.

During the nearly month long strike, several workers have been severely injured while passing out leaflets to other truck drivers or at the hands of police and hired thugs who have raided their strike encampment. Pulmuone drivers spent the recent Korean harvest holiday, Chuseok (26 - 29 September), away from their families in the hospital or on the picket line.

'Veteran' the Movie

Recently the Korean Action movie 'Veteran' by Seung-wan Ryoo opened in theaters in North America. This movie depicts a truck driver who joins the KPTU Cargo Truckers Solidarity Division (KPTU-TruckSol), but has his contract cancelled in retaliation. When he goes to the Chaebol (conglomerate) client for help and to get his back wages, he is literally physically beat up.

Sadly, this fictitious violence is being repeated in reality by Pulmuone and other big road freight clients in South Korea. The violence is both direct, like the union repression experience by striking Pulmuone drivers (the worker below spent the holidays in the hospital after being beaten), and indirect, where clients put pressure on drivers to drive under dangerous conditions that put everyone at risk.

Dangerous Driving Conditions Rampant in South Korea's Trucking Industry

In South Korea (as in many countries), large companies at the top of the supply chains keep rates of payment low and use the fact that the vast majority of Korean truck drivers are 'owner drivers' as an excuse to refuse to recognise their union and force them to accept inhumane contract conditions.

As a result, truck drivers are under pressure to speed, overload, drive fatigued, skip on maintenance and engage in other dangerous driving practice in order to make ends meet. Roughly 1200 people die on our roads every year as a result of truck-related accidents.

To fight these problems KPTU-TruckSol, has been fighting for a safe rates system like the one

recently introduced in Australia, known in Korea as 'standard rates'. This system would make clients and transport companies accountable for fair rates, which would make it possible for drivers to drive safely. Despite a government promise to implement this system in 2009, legislation has yet to be passed. The fight goes on!

The strike of Pulmuone workers is part of a large struggle to make companies at the top of supply chains accountable for public safety and workers' rights. Please give these workers your support.

You can do this by:

1. Watching the videos 'Story of Pulmuone Drivers' (Be sure to click 'like' and leave a message of support!)

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LaCsBHXn8S8>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWtq7j4pAQw&feature=youtu.be>

2. Making sure other people see these videos by spreading them on social media.

3. Boycotting Pulmuone

4. Taking a solidarity picture with attached sign and posting it to your and Pulmuone's social media.

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pulmuonelove>

- Twitter: @pulmuonelove

- Blog: <http://blog.pulmuone.com/>

Please also send a copy to kptu.intl@gmail.com to be shared with striking workers.

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P.S.

* "Pulmuone - 'Wholesome Foods' hide Unwholesome Deeds". [Source. KPTU](#)