

LUXURIOUS PROFITS and disposable jobs



International Campaign in Support of Unilever Lux Workers in Pakistan

In 2007, nearly 300 workers at the Unilever factory in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan, after struggling for years to feed themselves and their families on "temporary" contracts, sought permanent employment status and union membership. They were fired in the presence of armed policemen and Elite Troops — and instantly replaced with contract workers performing identical tasks. With the support of the IUF and the National Federation of Food, Beverage and Tobacco Workers, they formed an Action Committee to fight for full reinstatement as directly employed, permanent workers. Their fight for justice continues — and needs your support.

The Unilever workers in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan make some of the company's leading billion dollar "global brands", including Lux and Sunsilk products. These brands, according to Unilever, "are the pulse and heartbeat" of the people of Pakistan. Yet for decades, the company has paid them with the steady destruction of permanent, direct employment. At the plant today there are a small, steadily shrinking group of 145 permanent workers, and some 500 casual workers supplied by dozens of contractors.



Big global brands

13 "billion dollar brands"



Top 25 brands = ¾ of Unilever's sales

Big global brands = big global profits = 100% disposable jobs

A Unilever presentation to Wall Street investors and financial analysts (17 February 2009) says: "We have some of the world's best known and most loved brands. Our 'top 25' account for nearly 75% of our global turnover – close to 30 billion euros. And we have 13 global brands with annual sales of over 1 billion euros..."

But the workers in Pakistan who make the products that carry this global brand are paid poverty wages.

Unilever's web site tells us that "The company operates through 4 regional offices, as well as 4 wholly owned and 6 third party manufacturing sites across Pakistan." Hugely profitable Unilever Pakistan claims to have thousands of employees, but the reality is that the company has only 314 employees on direct, permanent contracts in its entire country-wide operation. Unilever has been waging a relentless war on permanent employment, and now relies on a vicious system of disposable jobs — agency workers who can be sent home if there is no work, receive a poverty wage, and enjoy no pension or other benefits. Agency workers can't join a union of Unilever employees, because formally they are not employed by Unilever.



In 2007, a group of 292 "temporary" workers at the Rahim Yar Khan factory challenged the system of disposable jobs. They demanded the right to permanent, direct employment. These temporary workers had been hired directly by Unilever on renewable 9-month contracts — and should have been made permanent after 9 months of continuous employment, according to Pakistan law. Most of them had worked at Rahim Yar Khan for years. The workers sought membership in the union which helped them fight for their legal right to permanent employment, including filing dozens of cases in the labour court.



Unilever responded by militarizing the plant, filling it with armed police and Elite Troops. The temporary workers were forced to sign their termination letters in the presence of armed police. Within 24 hours, they were replaced by agency contract workers.

Despite the severe difficulties and risks of fighting Unilever in a town it dominates, the dismissed temporary workers bravely continue their fight for justice. They are fighting for the rights and dignity of casual, abused precarious workers everywhere.

Support the Lux workers' struggle for justice and an end to disposable jobs!

What you can do:

- Visit www.iuf.org/LUXuriousprofits to join the campaign and send a message to Unilever in support of the Lux workers
- Contact Unilever management in your city to express your support for the campaign
- Contact us to learn more about how you can help

Contact details for campaign:



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