

# Condemnation against continued violence directed at a Shenzhen labour group:

## A joint statement from Hong Kong civil organizations

In the recent weeks, we, a group of Hong Kong groups and unions who cover labour issues in China have learned of a series of violent attacks on a labour group and its legal person in Shenzhen. We are very upset, concerned and enraged about the recent development.

The Shenzhen Dagongzhe Migrant Worker Centre (DGZ Centre) has been long supported by the general public and Hong Kong groups. It provides a free library, labour law education and free legal consultation to migrant workers in Shenzhen. In recent months, it has been involved in promoting knowledge around the "Labour Contract Law", a new law the national government is introducing to help safeguard workers; and it has provided legal advice in order to de-fuse the current growing tension between employers and workers.

On 11 Oct and 14 Nov 2007, a group of unknown and unidentified people came to destroy the properties of DGZ Centre. On 20 Nov, the legal person of the centre, Huang Qingnan was attacked by two people with choppers, on the way to visit a injured worker, just after he left the centre. Huang is seriously injured. In recent months, workers reported they had also been assaulted and verbally threatened by their employers when claiming their wages. Reports to the police have not met with success or interest. They were disappointed that the local government was behaving very indifferently.

The attacks on the centre and Mr. Huang prove that interest groups which are trying to paralyze the implementation of this law, distorting the central governments labour policies and revealing openly their dislike of independent labour organizations. If the DGZ Centre's case is not properly followed up and no proper investigation is undertaken, it will give a regrettable and worrying message that violent prevails. Civil groups in Shenzhen and also other parts of China would face more assaults and their development could be limited.

Although we are in based Hong Kong, we care for China's development and we work for the education and welfare of Chinese workers. In order to develop a harmonious society, fairness and justice must be safeguarded. Therefore, the case of DGZ centre must be resolved and the safety of civil groups in China must be guaranteed.

### **We demand that the Central government & the Shenzhen city government:**

- Openly condemns & investigates all violent incidents, and in particular the attack on Huang Qingnan;
- Helps DGZ Centre to re-start its works and provides Huang Qingnan with appropriate medical treatment and rehabilitation;
- Implements the national policy to maintain a harmonious labour relations, improves the protection of civil groups and their staff in order to prevent violent acts and maintain public security.

**Initiated by:** Worker Empowerment; Globalisation Monitor; Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM); Labour Action China; Asia Monitor Resources Centre

**Supported and cosigned by:** ITUC/GUF/HKCTU/HKTUC Hong Kong Liaison Office; Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

We are calling for support and co-sign, please e-mail to [workerempowerment@gamil.com](mailto:workerempowerment@gamil.com) or call 852-81351480 (Suzanne Wu) on or before 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007 (17:00 +8 GMT)

For Huang Qing-nan, he is now hospitalized in Longgang Central Hospital. He has been moved from intensive care unit to the common unit on 21 Nov. His left back & left leg received most of the cuts. Huang was a victim of an occupational injury several years ago and the old injury poses complications for the treatment. We sincerely hope to get information for better orthopedist or medical institutions. **We are also raising funds for his medical treatment, rehabilitation and living costs, which are estimated to be 200,000 yuan (USD27,000), and your help is very much needed.**

Bank A/C Name: Worker Empowerment

Bank A/C no.: 227-9-090365

Bank Code: 024

Bank Address: 83 Des Voeux Road, Central, Hong Kong

Swift Code: HASE HKHH

*Please e-mail to [vivienyau@sacom.hk](mailto:vivienyau@sacom.hk) for receipt or enquiry on donation.*

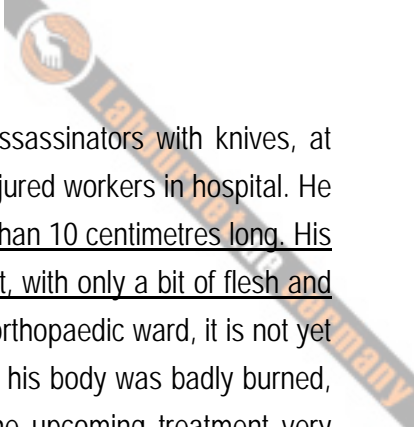
## Press Release

25-11-2007

### **Labour organization in Shenzhen attacked & its legal person severely assaulted** **Hong Kong civil society demands the Chinese government** **for a full investigation to safeguard labour groups' safety**

In recent days, a labour group in Shenzhen was continuously being attacked and its legal person being stabbed (see attachment 1: list of incidents). The Hong Kong civil groups are shocked by such scale of violence and strongly condemn this. The attacks show that certain "interest groups" in Shenzhen are openly violating the national, pro-labour rights policy.

The labour organization under attacks is called "Dagongzhe Centre (DGZ Centre)", which registered as "company" in Longgang District of Shenzhen city. It provides library, labour law education and consultation to workers, to migrant workers in Shenzhen for free. In the recent months, it has been involved in promoting the "Labour Contract Law", a new law the national government is introducing to safeguard workers; and provided legal advices, in order to de-fuse the tension between employers and workers by legal means. It is believed that its role has upset some "interest groups" and they try to threaten the group with violence. According to workers from Longgang District, Baoan District and Dongguan City, workers are being beaten or verbally threatened when they try to claim their wages. Workers are disappointed by the local government bodies' indifference and inability. The case at DGZ Centre is not an individual random case, but a clear signal from the "interest groups" that they would resist the national law, even by using violence. It is indeed a social problem. DGZ Centre wants the Shenzhen city government to play a more active role in safeguarding their safety and investigate the case seriously, in order to capture the attackers and the "interest groups" behind the attacks.



On 20 Nov, the legal person of the centre, Huang Qing-nan was attacked by two assassins with knives, at Longhu New Village, a community behind the centre, when he was on his way to visit injured workers in hospital. He was seriously injured. His back, waist, left leg were chopped and left him wounds more than 10 centimetres long. His left leg has the worst cuts. His muscle, bones, blood vessels, and nerves were cut apart, with only a bit of flesh and skin connecting the parts. He stayed in the intensive care unit until being transferred to orthopaedic ward, it is not yet clear if he could ever recover. Huang had a serious industrial accident in the past and his body was badly burned, leaving him many parts of his muscle cannot sketch normally, which would make the upcoming treatment very difficult. We are now calling the Shenzhen Government to offer Huang proper treatment and rehabilitation.

After the incidents, DGZ Centre sent out an appeal letter (see attachment 2: appeal letter to Hong Kong civil groups), calling for support from Hong Kong groups. Several labour groups, Workers' Empowerment, Labour Action China, Asia Monitor Resources Centre, Globalization Monitor, which run projects in China respond immediately. If justice is not done for this case, it will give a misleading message to the attackers and more labour groups and their staff would be harmed. The Hong Kong labour groups urge the Shenzhen city government to ensure the security and stop violent actions, to safeguard the staff at the civil organizations and the society.

Though we are in Hong Kong, we care for China's development and we work for the welfare of Chinese workers. To develop a harmonious society, fairness and justice must be safeguarded. Therefore, the case of DGZ centre must be rightfully solved and the safety of civil groups in China must be guaranteed. We strongly demand the Chinese government:

- Openly condemns & investigates all violent incidents, and in particular the attack on Huang Qingnan;
- Helps DGZ Centre to re-start its works and provides Huang Qingnan with appropriate medical treatment and rehabilitation;
- Implements the national policy to maintain a harmonious labour relations, improves the protection of civil groups and their staff in order to prevent violent acts and maintain public security.

Issued by Worker Empowerment, Labour Action China, Asia Monitor Resources Centre, Globalisation Monitor, Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Appendix: Recent attacks against the Dagongzhe--Migrant Worker Centre, its staff and the Centre's registered License holder [Registrant]**

*What follows is a short summary of the three main attacks on the Dagongzhe Migrant Worker centre in Shenzhen which took place in the last few weeks the most serious of which has critically injured centre staff.*

**Incident 1: 11 October 2007 (Thursday) at the Dagongzhe--Migrant Worker Centre rooms.**

At around seven o'clock at night on 11 October 2007, the centre was occupied by some dozen workers workers, who were reading newspapers and chatting quietly. Several men with steel water pipes came to the front door, and broke the glass door into pieces with their steel bars. They then waved the bars

threateningly at the workers inside as a warning. The two men left the scene shortly after they had smashed down the door and got onto two motorcycles they had parked outside.

The centre staff reported the incident to the local police who sent two policemen over to take photos of the damage. Statements were made to the police by a staff member and Huang Qingnan; the Centre's license holder [the term "registrant" is used in Chinese]. However the police did not take any further action and the staff were informed that it was a minor event since nobody was injured.

### **Incident two: 14 November 2007 (Wednesday) at the Dagongzhe--Migrant Worker Centre, Shenzhen.**

On the 14 November 2007, just over one month since the previous attack, at around half past four in the afternoon, when a dozen or so workers and staff were present, four men appeared outside the front door of DGZ Centre and immediately began smashing the door and then the equipment inside with steel water pipes they held in their hands. In the space of a few minutes, the glass door, OSH equipment showcase, desks, water machine, whiteboard and first-aid box etc., were all destroyed. One of the assailants told us in the midst of the attack; "see, you can't operate like this now".

They then ran out of the centre right and got into a white mini-van waiting for them. The car-plate read "Guangdong BMXXXX", but the rest of the plate was covered. At the same time, we saw three policemen, patrolling in dark-blue uniforms, just outside our centre and looking on at the events, without doing anything. When we looked into their eyes, they turned their faces away.

I immediately called the local Tongle police station, the only one in the Longgang district police station. The Tongle station sent a police officer (number 064643) to write down the testimony of the staff member who witnessed the attack. However when staff requested to see the video of the CCTV set up on the centre's street, it was claimed that the video did not have a "recording function". The policeman also implied that the incident was minor as nobody was injured in the two attacks and he estimated losses at only some one to two thousand Yuan.

### **Incident three: 20 November 2007 (Tuesday) in the street near the Dagongzhe--Migrant Worker Centre, Shenzhen.**

At about three thirty or so in the afternoon of the 20 November, Huang Qingnan, the DGZ Centre's license holder left the DGZ Centre and was going to the hospital to visit an injured worker. When he passed the gas station, opposite to block 66, Longhu New Village, he saw a worker he knew, who was watching the people playing mahjong there. Suddenly two men with knives came up to Huang and attacked him from the back. They first cut and stabbed his neck, back, followed by his thighs and legs. His legs received most of the cuts and stabs. One resident threw two bricks at the assassins and chased them for several metres, before they took a motorbike and managed to escape. Two patrolling police were around but they did not manage to catch anyone. Huang was severely injured and lost a lot of blood. The local residents called Emergency number 120 and an ambulance arrived to take him to hospital.

He remains in serious condition.