



UPRCP Statement of Solidarity to the Workers of Tanduay Distillers, Inc.

The Urban Poor Resource Center of the Philippines (UPRCP) stands in solidarity with the exploited workers of Tanduay Distillers, Inc. who have remained on strike to fight for just compensation, regularization, and the right to association.

We support the call for wage increase amidst the rising cost of basic commodities. The 400 workers who have walked out of the Asia Brewery compound on the 18th of May have received Php 315 for eight hours of work per day which is below Php 362, the mandated daily minimum wage in the Calabarzon industrial area. Clearly, the compensation received by the workers is below subsistence level in the midst of the privatization of social services and the government's lack of social protection for the poor. In contrast, the company's wealth remains staggering. In 2012, the company reported Php 10 billion (US\$224.6 million) in net sales. The following year, the net sales increased to Php 12 billion (US\$269.5 million).

Regional wage rates have been maximized by Tanduay Distillers, Inc. and many companies in order to earn billions in profits. What the workers have been getting and even the mandated daily minimum wage in the Calabarzon industrial area is way below the daily Family Living Wage (as of August 2014) of Php 1,086.00 per day. Consequently, supporting the call for a monthly national minimum wage of Php 16,000.00 is imperative to uplift the lives of the Filipino workforce.

We are one with the Tanduay strikers in calling for regularization in the workplace. It has been reported that 90 percent of the distilleries' production comes from contracted labor sourced from two employment agencies that also ask workers to pay unnecessary fees. The personal protective equipment, for instance, is not provided for by the company. Instead, the employment agencies deduct the cost from the workers' already meager wages. These contractual workers have toiled in the assembly line for five to eleven years without any benefits such as medical insurance, sick leaves, vacation leaves, or bonuses.

As contractuales, the workers are bereft of the right to join unions or organize one on their own initiative. Contractualization, which is rife in the Philippines, is a tool conveniently wielded by companies in order to prevent employees from forming associations. This practice runs against the fourth point of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Decent Work Agenda which guarantees workers the right to social dialogue wherein they are able to practice democracy in the workplace through their unions as well as engage in negotiations related to their conditions at work.

Since the first day of the strike, the workers have been subjected to violence not only by Lucio Tan's hired goons but also from state security forces as media practitioners have sighted vans bearing 'BJMP' within the premises of the Asia Brewery Compound.

Tanggulan ng Ugnayan Dulugang Lakas ng Anakpawis sa Tanduay Distillers Inc. or TUDLA has experienced discrimination in the hands of the officials of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Region IV-A as they sought to register the union, succeeding only in April after a long and tortuous process. Moreover, inspectors from DOLE do not really observe the actual labor conditions whenever they come over.

Despite these, TUDLA has recent victories. DOLE Region IV-A has declared that Tanduay Distillers, Inc. has been hiring workers illegally under the labor-only-contracting scheme. Moreover, the legitimacy of the workers' union was upheld by the labor arbiter when this was questioned by the management.

With the raging brutality in the picket lines and the legal successes of TUDLA, it is questionable for DOLE Secretary Rosalina D. Baldoz to remain passive. It seems that there is an implicit approval of DOLE Region IV-A's dilly-dallying on the case of the Tanduay workers. In the eyes of the public, this inaction does not bode well for DOLE's regional office and even for its national office. Lucio Tan, the second richest billionaire in the Philippines, who remains callous to the workers who built his wealth, is not exempted from the labor laws and its governing policies. Thus, we not only condemn him but also denounce DOLE's lackadaisical attitude towards the resolution of this problem.

It is undeniable that the vast army of reserved labor force comes from the urban poor. It is also undeniable that the urban poor are exploited by low wage rates and contractualization. And so we would like to link arms with the workers of TUDLA and all the others who toil under these oppressive conditions.

In support of the Tanduay workers on strike, we are encouraging everyone to put a dent on Lucio Tan's earnings by boycotting the following products:

**TANDUAY 5 YEARS FINE DARK
RHUM
TANDUAY RUM 1854
TANDUAY RHUM 65 FINE DARK
RHUM
TANDUAY FINE WHITE RHUM
BORACAY RUM
TANDUAY COCKTAILS**

**TANDUAY 5 YEARS LIGHT
TANDUAY ASIA RHUM
GIN KAPITAN
LONDON PREMIUM DRY GIN
GIN KAPITAN LIGHT
COSSACK VODKA
COMPANERO LIGHT BRANDY
EMBASSY WHISKEY**

Interested in helping the Tanduay workers on strike? You can get in touch with us:

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