

The Provincial Government of Guangdong, the Municipal Government of Shenzhen, the Municipal Government of Dongguan.

Wang Yang, Secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China.  
Wang Rong, Secretary of the Shenzhen Municipal Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China. Xu Jianhua, Secretary of the Dongguan Municipal Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China.

### **Please confirm the legitimate work of NGOs and support their continued development**

Last July, the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee approved the *Decision on Strengthening Social Construction*, which states that, as of 1 July this year, civil society groups in Guangdong can register directly with the Department of Civil Affairs. This lowering of the registration threshold was considered by many to be an innovative reform. However, over the last few months, many Shenzhen-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helping to defend workers' rights have come under pressure and were forced to close down. These organizations have consistently provided migrant workers with legal assistance, education, training and social services. They act as a voice for and defender of the long over-looked rights and interests of migrant workers. We call on local governments to halt the suppression of these NGOs and acknowledge their legitimate work.

We understand that the Shenzhen Spring Wind Labour Dispute Service Centre, the Time Women Workers Centre, the Yuandian Workers Centre, the Dagongzhe Migrant Worker Centre, the Green Grass Workers Centre, the Little Grass Workers' Home and the Dongguan Youwei Workers Centre have, as a result of local government pressure, been forced to relocate, suffered harassment, had their utilities cut off, undergone sudden tax inspections, and even seen workers participating in their activities being threatened. This pressure has forced these groups to close down.

In February 2012, just three months into a three year rental contract for its office in Shenzhen's Bao'an district, the Spring Wind Labour Dispute Service Centre was told by its landlord that the rental contract had been cancelled, the water and electricity was cut off and its signs taken down. They were strongly urged to leave.

In March 2012, the Yuandian Workers Centre was inspected by numerous local government departments and the landlord issued a notice of contract termination.

In April, the Dagongzhe Migrant Worker Centre suffered surveillance and interference by unidentified individuals, after which the landlord terminated the rental agreement and the utilities were cut off. Dagongzhe's representative Huang Qinnan was brutally attacked in 2007, and the centre was forced to relocate in 2008 and 2010.

In May, the Green Grass Workers Centre was subject to numerous local government inspections and was informed by the landlord of the termination of the rental agreement.

In June, the Time Women Workers Centre was the victim of selective law enforcement by the Industry and Commerce department, which ordered it to close down and relocate because it had not registered.

At the same time, the Little Grass Workers' Home suffered numerous local government inspections and was informed by the landlord that their rental agreement would be terminated ahead of schedule. Moreover, two fulltime staff had their residential leasing agreements cancelled in quick succession.

And in July, the Dongguan Youwei Workers Center was informed by the landlord that the rental agreement would be cancelled. The landlord complained of repeated police harassment. Afterwards, the group's bank account was frozen because of an investigation by the local tax authorities.

We can see from the above incidents that the Shenzhen and Dongguan governments' monitoring of NGOs has not relaxed; on the contrary, they have engaged in multifaceted oppression. Many people working in labour organisations have also complained of harassment by local governments, placing intangible pressures on their work. These consecutive moves by local governments against labour groups, we believe, gives the impression that the policies of the provincial government have been subverted, and that the Spring Wind of Guangdong's reforms is now bringing in a bitter winter.

We urge the Guangdong provincial government to respond to this suppression of labour groups and implement its more relaxed policy for the registration of civil society groups. Respect civil and labour rights and allow public interest groups the space to develop.

**Asia Monitor Resource Centre**

**China Labour Bulletin**

**The Chinese Working Women Network**

**Globalization Monitor**

**Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions**

**Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee**

**Hong Kong Catholic Committee for Justice and Peace**

**IHLO (Hong Kong Liaison Office of the international trade union movement)**

**Labour Action China**

**Labour Education and Service Network**

**The Labour Party (Hong Kong)**

**Neighbourhood Workers Service Centre**

**Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehaviour**

**Worker Empowerment**

**15 August 2012**