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China Labor Watch (CLW) is an independent not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in New York. Over the past 20 years, CLW has been closely following, investigating, and researching the labor conditions in China. CLW has conducted numerous in-depth assessments and written investigative reports of factories in China that are producers for some of the largest multinational brand companies. CLW also continues to pay close attention to and investigates the issue of forced labor in China, including the use of prison labor, forced labor at drug detoxification centers, detention centers, and re-education camps ("vocational training centers"), etc. The labor conditions in many suppliers' factories have been improved as a direct outcome of our investigative reports.

CLW has been receiving allegations referring to forced labor in China regularly. Since the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also received allegations referring to forced labor targeting overseas Chinese migrant workers including migrant workers in Singapore. China's actual migrant labor force in Singapore exceeds 150,000, accounting for about 10% of Singapore's total foreign labor. We have found long-standing violations of migrant workers' rights and "a pandemic of inequality" in Singapore.

The confiscation of passports and/or other identity documents such as work permits of overseas Chinese workers by employers remains very common. When workers' passports are taken away, workers are held as forced labor. The majority of overseas Chinese workers were forced to pay high recruitment fees.

Most "low-skilled" overseas Chinese migrant workers in Singapore live in packed foreign worker dormitories. After the Singaporean government realized that the coronavirus was spreading rapidly among foreign workers, it began to strictly isolate foreign workers' dormitories on April 7th to separate migrant workers the community. Foreign workers were not allowed to leave their dormitories for weeks, sometimes months while waiting to be tested. In August, the Singaporean government completed COVID-19 testing for all migrant workers in dormitories and allowed most workers to return to work. But workers are only allowed to go out for work. Most of the time they are still locked away. A local volunteer group told CLW in September that the recurring outbreaks in migrant labor dormitories had placed more than 10,000 migrant workers back into quarantine. The entire building would be put under lock down when one confirmed case of COVID-19 is found. In some cases, migrant workers could not even leave the dormitory for a medical appointment.

Nearly 95 percent of the more than 57,000 COVID-19 infections in Singapore are foreign migrant workers living in overcrowded dormitories. As of September 21, the COVID-19

infection rate has reached 16.82% among migrant worker dorm residents, which is more than 400 times higher than the Singaporean population. Many of migrant workers have experienced repeated lockdowns for months since the beginning of April as the entire building is locked down when one confirmed case of COVID-19 is found. Even after they are permitted to re-enter the workforce, they are still confined to their dormitories most of the time with limited exceptions for work. Many Chinese migrant workers need to send money home to support their families every month. When they are locked away to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in Singaporean communities, they suffer from wage losses which leads to workers having higher debts, as their families are forced to take out loans to sustain their livelihoods.

Out of a total of 27 COVID-19 related deaths in Singapore, two are Chinese migrant workers. The third one has not been officially counted. Their names, ages, and hometowns are: Gu Zhenfei, 51 years old, from Qidong, Nantong, Jiangsu Province. Wu Liyou, 41 years old, from Feidong County, Anhui Province. Yang Xiaolei, 42 years old from Donghai, Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province. Unfortunately, Yang Xiaolei was hospitalized and discharged after being diagnosed with COVID-19. He died suddenly during isolation in a hotel arranged by the hospital. His body was only discovered approximately two days after his death. The news of his death and the cause of death have yet to be announced by the Singaporean government. His family is still in shock and demanding an answer regarding his death.

A local WeChat group "Hubei & the Lion City's Loving Heart Group" have continued to fundraise and make donations to Chinese migrant workers in Singapore. The organizers of the volunteer group, Xiong Gang and Li Wenmei told CLW that they witnessed prejudice and discrimination in Singaporean society against foreign workers. encountered an online trolling incident when someone posted a video verbally abusing overseas Chinese workers, telling them to get out of Singapore. Some Singaporeans believed that foreign migrant workers were provided with accommodation, food, wages and healthcare by the government and didn't need any assistance. But this is untrue. In reality, although Singapore's Ministry of Manpower stated that the government subsidized all employers S\$750 per month per migrant worker, employers are allowed to deduct various lodging and food costs from the full amount and only give the remaining amount to their employees. A Chinese worker who has been working in Singapore for nine years told China Labor Watch in September that he has been in quarantine from April to September, but his employer "Yangzijiang Private Limited" only gave him S\$500 (approximately USD\$330) for May and S\$600 (approximately USD\$440) for June.

The volunteers learned that the food provided in dorms by the government is often very unfamiliar to Chinese workers, that they had to find other ways to buy food or rely on instant ramen noodles and preserved vegetables donated by the volunteers. The workers feel marginalized, vulnerable, and frustrated. Most overseas Chinese workers are dependent on daily wages for their living and their families' living. When they lose work,

they lose income. Some Chinese workers even had to ask volunteers to buy them mobile data so they could stay in touch with their families. A few Chinese workers have attempted suicide due to long term stress and isolation.

When a migrant worker is injured at work, they often have to wait for months to receive a disability compensation offer. During this period of time, their work permit is cancelled and they are placed on a special pass. A Chinese migrant worker who is paralyzed from a falling object injury at work told CLW that he is disappointed by the passive treatment in the hospital. However, he hesitates to leave Singapore to seek medical treatment in China because his injury compensation claim has not been settled. If he leaves, the Ministry of Manpower will not issue any Special Pass unless his physical presence in Singapore is necessary for the resolution of the claim. In that case, he will not be able to have the full access to justice related to his claim.

We recommend that the Singapore government should sign all major international conventions on migrant workers' rights. Singapore should allow foreign workers to change employers. And foreign workers should be entitled to the same social welfare benefits and mobility as local workers.