

South Korea: Incheon Airport Contracted Workers Stage 24-hour Strike

If Airport Corporation fails to respond, will go on strike indefinitely beginning November 16

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At 7:00am today, November 11, contracted workers at Incheon International Airport organized by the KPTU Incheon Airport Regional Branch began a 24-hour strike calling for decent working conditions, job security and guarantee of union activities. This strike action follows a 3-hour warning strike held on November 1.

The Incheon International Airport Corporation (hereafter, Airport Corporation) responded with illegal measures to break the strike, bringing in illegal replacement workers and the filming union members participating in the rally held in the transportation center leading into the airport's main terminal. In the last several days the Airport Corporation has stepped up its surveillance and intimidation tactics, denouncing legal and peaceful protest actions such as the wearing of union vests during work hours 'illegal industrial actions' and threatening strike participants with dismissal, criminal charges and suits for damages.

The KPTU Incheon Airport Branch members, however, have not been daunted. Close to 1000 workers gathered for today's strike rally, with only those required to do so by minimum service requirements staying on the job. During the rally, union members read letters they had written to the Airport Corporation, sang the union branch's theme song "Will the real boss please step forward", and chanted slogans such as, "Direct employment for contracted workers". The union members and rally participants also chanted slogans in English, Spanish and Bengali in solidarity with SEIU Local 32BJ New York airport members, who are carrying out their own campaign for decent working conditions at La Guardia, Newark and JFK International Airport.

At the end of the rally, Branch President Seong-deok Jo and KPTU Incheon Airport Strategic Organizing Campaign Coordinator Gil-suk Min carried out a ritual hair shaving ceremony to demonstrate their resolve for the upcoming struggle. The union branch has vowed to go on strike indefinitely on November 16 if the Airport Corporation and contracting companies refuse to come to the bargaining table.

KPTU Incheon Airport Regional Branch Demands

1. Ensure continuation of employment (job security) for all contracted workers at the airport!
2. Grant continuous-service allowances and paid public holidays. Increase transportation allowances!
3. Create a taskforce to work on improving the shift system!
4. Stop interference with union activities!
5. Stop illegal measures aimed at breaking the union's legitimate strike!

6. Incheon International Airport Corporation, come to the bargaining table with the union!

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