



LafargeHolcim contract workers achieve fair settlement in India

04.02.2016 After years of struggle, Indian cement union, PCSS, has reached a fair settlement for over 1,000 contract workers at Holcim (now LafargeHolcim).

IndustriALL Global Union affiliate, PCSS, which represents the majority of contract workers at the LafargeHolcim-owned ACC Jamul cement plant, has reached a deal with management following a long-running dispute over redeployment and rehabilitation of the workers.

Now, more than half the workers will keep their jobs. According to the 22 January settlement, 259 contract workers will be working at the new Jamul plant and 277 at the old Jamul plant. The two plants are located next to each other in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh.

The settlement also provides for the progressive readjustment of the salaries of the contract workers to reach the national wage agreement for the cement industry.

The remaining 458 workers who are losing their jobs will benefit from a severance package and be given support for rehabilitation.

PCSS, with assistance from IndustriALL, has been in constant negotiations with local management since the beginning of 2015. The talks came in part as a result of an OECD complaint in Switzerland submitted against Holcim by PCSS and IndustriALL predecessor ICEM in 2012.

The complaint, which also concerned another of the company's Indian plants, Ambuja Cement Ltd, focused on three main violations committed by Holcim against OECD Guidelines on Multinational Companies:

- Precarious employment in core activities at both ACC Jamul Ltd and Ambuja Cement Ltd against the national law
- Discrimination of workers based on employment
- Insufficient employment for local people

Contract workers are protected by Indian law and by a sectoral agreement prohibiting employment in core production work, with all work paid at the same rate as permanent workers.

Swiss multinational Holcim merged with French-owned cement giant Lafarge in July 2015 to become the biggest cement producer in the world.

Matthias Hartwich, IndustriALL director, said

"IndustriALL wholeheartedly sends congratulations to PCSS. This was a long struggle but we are glad to see this settlement for our colleagues in India. I hope that this is a good sign for social dialogue with the new LafargeHolcim group for the future. We are especially glad that the settlement brings justice to vulnerable precarious workers. IndustriALL will continue working and supporting PCSS and all other cement unions

in their efforts to settle the dispute at the Ambuja plant. We urge LafargeHolcim to minimize the use of precarious work and respect the India Cement Wage Board for all their workers.”

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