



UNITE HERE LOCAL 40

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July 26, 2021

Ambassador Keung Ryong Chang
Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Canada
150 Boteler Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 5A6

Dear Ambassador Chang,

UNITE HERE Local 40 is the hospitality workers union in B.C. and an affiliate of UNITE HERE International representing over 300,000 hotel and food service workers across North America. We write to you on behalf of our members at Hilton Vancouver Metrotown (Burnaby, BC) who have been locked out for over three months. The hotel is owned by Seoul-based DSDL. Hilton Metrotown and DSDL are controlled by the prominent and politically connected Cho family. Their actions during the pandemic reflect poorly on South Korean business interests in Canada. Given the family's stature in South Korea, we urge you to engage the family to resolve this escalating situation.

When the pandemic struck, Hilton Metrotown laid off most of its staff. Understanding the impact COVID-19 has had on the hotel industry, workers urged hotel management and the Cho family to commit to return them to their jobs as business recovers. Rather than work together during a temporary pandemic, the hotel fired 97 workers – including some who had been with the hotel since opening twenty years ago. The hotel locked-out the rest on April 15, 2021. Workers have been on the picket line for more than 14 weeks. Despite months of protests and boycotts by major clients of the hotel, the Cho family has shown no real willingness to end this dispute.

Hilton Metrotown workers have received an outpouring of support from the community. The Burnaby Mayor and City Council passed a motion to stop doing business with the hotel until they resolve to bring back staff and end the labour dispute. The hotel stands to lose millions due to a boycott by the BC Federation of Labour. Lufthansa Airlines, non-profits, corporate and union customers have cancelled future bookings costing the hotel millions of dollars.

The Alberta Federation of Labour has pledged to boycott DSDL's three Edmonton hotels beginning August 8th in support of the workers if there is no resolution. Unionized workers at DSDL's hotel in Quebec City recently held a symbolic picket line to protest DSDL's treatment of locked-out staff.

We have reason to be concerned about DSDL's judgement. According to our research, DSDL's Chairman, Cho Wuk Rai, has a troubling history. In September 2009, the Seoul High Court Criminal Division 2 found Mr. Cho guilty of engaging in unfair internal transactions when he was Chairman of Hyosung Machinery Group. He was accused of setting up illegal loans between businesses he controls, which led to the bankruptcy of two publicly traded companies. He was sentenced to two

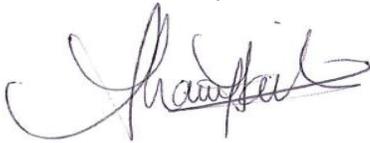
and half years in prison and three years of probation. Despite being convicted of illegal behaviour, he received a special pardon for his charges from President Lee Myung-bak on Korean National Liberation Day in August 2010. President Lee's daughter is married to Cho's nephew.

DSDL's Chairman was convicted for financial wrongdoing previously. In 1998, Seoul District Prosecutor's Office indicted Mr. Cho for embezzling 12 billion won of company funds and causing 5.3 billion won of losses to his company. He was sentenced to prison in February 2002 by the Seoul High Court. Less than a year later, he received a pardon from the Korean government alongside 121 businesspeople involved in various corruption scandals.

British Columbia is a key entryway for South Korean travelers visiting Canada. In 2019, before the pandemic, over 44% of inbound visitors from South Korea landed in British Columbia. However, we are deeply concerned that the crisis at Hilton Metrotown, between working people in British Columbia – many of them racialized women – and members of the South Korean business and political elite, will negatively damage ongoing good faith and trust between communities of the two countries.

As the bridge between South Korea and Canada, we urge you to support the workers and to engage DSDL and the Cho family on a prompt and fair resolution to this conflict.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zailda Chan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zailda Chan
President