

China iPhone factory workers take the money and leave after protests

24 November 2022, by Laurie CHEN



Employees are leaving a vast Foxconn plant in Zhengzhou after receiving payouts in the wake of angry protests over pay and conditions.

Employees are leaving a vast Foxconn iPhone factory in central China over working conditions and COVID restrictions, relieved to be taking pay-offs home after angry protests at the Taiwanese tech giant's plant.

The [workers](#) are leaving the plant in Zhengzhou in the wake of bloody clashes with police, in which more than a dozen protesters were hurt, furious about Foxconn's failure to deliver promised bonuses, employees told AFP.

"The contract suddenly changed and everyone was unhappy, in addition the previous incidents at Foxconn made everyone lose trust, so the protests happened," one female worker who wished to remain anonymous told AFP.

Foxconn has been desperate to keep operations ticking along at the factory, the world's biggest manufacturer of iPhones, after a handful of COVID

cases forced it to lock down the facility.

Now the firm is offering payouts to those that leave, with employees taking to social media Thursday to show they had received bonuses of 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) in return for terminating their contracts.

Several coaches are parked outside dormitories in the background of several videos, supposedly there to take staff home.

"Everyone's got their money and are about to leave," the female worker said.

"I'm pretty satisfied, workers who still want this or that should not be too greedy," she said.

Foxconn also appears keen to placate those who were beaten by police, with another worker telling AFP that injured colleagues received an additional 500 yuan on top of their leaving bonus.

Foxconn did not respond to an AFP request for comment.

However, screenshots of a company notice circulating online Thursday show that new employees who wished to leave would be offered 10,000 yuan to cover lost salary, quarantine and transport costs.

The notice said employees who registered to end their contracts would be paid 8,000 yuan and given another 2,000 yuan upon boarding buses arranged by the company back to their hometowns.

Protesters beaten

Footage of the protests shared with AFP and captured by a factory worker showed one person lying motionless on the ground next to a man in a blood-spattered jacket having his head bound in an effort to staunch a wound.

Another clip shows dozens of hazmat-clad personnel wielding batons and chasing employees, one of whom is knocked to the ground before appearing to be kicked in the head.

The worker who shared the videos and who was present at the protests estimated that around 20 people were wounded in the clashes, some of whom were taken to hospital. He requested anonymity to protect his safety.

He told AFP the confrontations broke out after new employees who signed an agreement with the factory to work at least 30 days in return for a one-time payment of 3,000 yuan (\$420) suddenly saw the figure slashed to just 30 yuan.

Foxconn has blamed a "technical error" in its payment systems for the non-payment, and promised [employees](#) that all salaries would be paid in line with company policies.

The unrest now seems to have cooled down, one worker told AFP.

"The new recruits should have all left, now everything is normal," the [worker](#) said.

One video published Thursday on the short-video platform Kuaishou shows hundreds of workers waiting to leave the dormitory quarters carrying suitcases.

"Get money and return home," read the caption, punctuated with a smiley emoji.

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