



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union
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For immediate release

Protests planned as Google dismisses two union representatives without evidence, following pressure on workers to incriminate colleagues

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Two cleaners and CAIWU union members, Henry Ramirez and Jorge Nelson Cardona, both employed by contractor Principle Cleaning at Google's Kings Cross site in London, were dismissed on October 18th following sustained pressure from these large companies to leave their work.

Both Jorge and Henry had recently been elected as workers' representatives at the Google site. In both cases, the representatives were accused of theft weeks after the incidents were alleged to have taken place. Neither have been shown the CCTV evidence cited by Google of the alleged thefts taking place. This "evidence" has not been shared with CAIWU despite requests in writing and hearings.

Henry and Jorge were both investigated by an individual named Kenny Davies, a "Global Investigator" for Google. The "Global Investigations" team investigates possible violations of Google's security/HR/Finance policies, Code of Conduct, and other business conditions, among other duties.

Both have now been dismissed, despite a lack of evidence of wrongdoing. The timing of the dismissals raises serious questions about Principle Cleaning's and Google's treatment of union members.

Prior to these dismissals, another cleaner reported coming under intense and sustained pressure to incriminate her suspended colleagues. Veronica Morales states that she was led from her workplace in Tottenham Court Road and taken by car to King's Cross. On arrival, she was ushered into a meeting room to be confronted by a number of managers from both Google and Principle, who tried to persuade her to incriminate Ramirez.

Morales is now concerned about the possibility of facing victimisation, after she told her interrogators that if they had any evidence to support the accusations they should produce it rather than trying to use her to advance their anti-union agenda.

Prior to these dismissals, Henry and Jorge were both removed from Google's London HQ, despite not yet being dismissed. At the time, CAIWU was in dialogue with Principle Cleaning in an attempt to settle relations without having to use

industrial action or public protests. CAIWU was left with no choice but to pull out of discussions at ACAS (the Government-backed Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), because Henry and Jorge, the elected representatives for their colleagues, were removed from site just days before talks had been agreed to take place.

According to the union, the issues due to be discussed at the cancelled ACAS meeting include ever-increasing workloads due to cuts in the number of cleaners, and Principle's failure to provide adequate cover for absences due to sickness or annual leave. Workers are also unhappy about Principle's refusal to offer cleaners a contractual sick pay scheme, its refusal to allow them to take more than two consecutive weeks of annual leave, and its failure to match the terms of bonus schemes offered by other Google service providers.

Google has even published a "Supplier Code of Conduct" outlining the obligations of suppliers to certain social, environmental and ethical responsibilities. It includes specific commitments not to discriminate against union members (a principle upheld in international employment, data-protection and non-discrimination laws and standards). The Code's section on "Fair Treatment, Non-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion" specifies that "Suppliers will not discriminate in screening, hiring or employment practices based on...union membership". Additionally, suppliers are required to "demonstrate a commitment to identify, measure and improve a culture of diversity and inclusion through all aspects of workplace management".

The Code of Conduct contains a specific clause on "Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining", stating that workers must be "permitted to associate freely, bargain collectively and seek representation in accordance with local laws. Suppliers are expected to permit workers to openly communicate and share grievances with management about working conditions without fear of reprisal or harassment".

About CAIWU: The Cleaners & Allied Independent Workers Union is a registered trade union representing over a thousand workers mainly in London's cleaning industry. We believe that every human being is entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace, and it is our mission to help our members fight for this basic right, along with others like fair pay, terms and work conditions.

About Principle: Principle is a £54 million contract cleaning company. It employs over 2,200 people and services over 250 clients. It claims to be passionate about 'people, quality and innovation'.

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Notes to editor:

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