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Egypt

Textile workers' strike

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Several thousands of workers at two of Egypt's largest textile companies "the Kafr al-Dawwar Textile Company and the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company in Mahalla al-Kubra" are on strike over unpaid bonuses promised by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Sisi decreed last month that the 10 percent bonuses would be paid retroactively from July to all employees in the public works sector.

Thousands of workers at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company, located in the Nile Delta Governorate of Gharbiya, have been on strike for the past [six](#) Thousands of other workers joined them on Sunday, launching an open-ended strike at the Kafr al-Dawwar Textile Company.

In response to the strike in Mahalla, administrators suspended three workers without pay, accusing them of "instigating strike action" and "obstructing production."

Administrators have accused striking workers of incurring millions of pounds worth of losses for the company, which is already in debt to the tune of nearly LE2 billion.

Kamal al-Fayoumy, a worker leader at the company "who was sacked several months ago on charges of instigating strikes" told Mada Masr: "On Thursday, three workers were suspended after administrators accused them of leading work stoppages. However, they have not been officially dismissed from work." He added that there has been talk of reinstating them.

Despite such punitive measures, an estimated 14,000 workers (from a total of over 17,000) at the company are continuing with their strike, with an escalation on Saturday, when they moved from a partial strike to a comprehensive strike.

According to Fayoumy, all the factories and production lines at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company have come to a standstill, with the exception of the administration, security personnel, and local utilities employees.

Mahalla's striking workers have also been demanding their monthly allocations of LE90 for food, which company administrators have pledged since May.

Fayoumy reported that the administrators of the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company are claiming that the Holding Company for Textile Industries, which manages 32 state-owned textile mills, are the ones responsible for providing the 10 percent bonus. But the Holding Company is claiming it is the Finance Ministry that is responsible.

"All these state officials and administrators are washing their hands of responsibility for the payment of the bonus decreed by President Sisi," Fayoumy said.

Thousands of workers at the Kafr al-Dawwar Textile Company (located in the Nile Delta Governorate of Beheira) launched a strike, along with factory-occupations and a sit-in on Sunday, demanding the payment of their overdue 10 percent bonuses.

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Citing workers at the company, the state-owned Middle East News Agency reported that the strike would continue indefinitely until administrators pay up.

Quoting local union committee president, Shaaban al-Baghdady, MENA reported that the non-payment of this officially-decreed bonus is likely to contribute to widening income disparities and "inequality amongst the ranks of public sector workers."

The state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) has reportedly been negotiating with 20 local union committees to encourage them to end the strike.

On Thursday, the privately-owned Youm7 news portal reported that ETUF chiefs had reached an agreement with the unions to halt the strikes.

The ETUF executive council's leadership expired in 2011, and since then the Ministry of Manpower has been handpicking and appointing the ETUF's board. In May this year, Sisi [issued a decree](#) which further extends the terms of these unelected officials by another year.

The ETUF website made no mention of the strikes over the non-payment of the 10 percent bonuses, instead it dedicated several of its pages to congratulating ETUF President Gebali al-Maraghi, and two other leaders of the federation, for winning seats in this year's parliamentary elections. Maraghy and the two other ETUF leaders were running under the pro-Sisi For the Love of Egypt list.

[Mada Masr](#)