

## **FACTSHEET ON CRANE INCIDENT INVOLVING ZHONG JIANG (SINGAPORE) INTERNATIONAL ON 6 DECEMBER 2012**

On 6 December 2012, two workers from Zhong Jiang (Singapore) International Pte Ltd's ("Zhong Jiang"), Zhu Guilei ("Zhu") and Wu Xiaolin ("Wu"), climbed atop two tower cranes in Jurong, claiming that their employer had withheld their salaries and intended to make unauthorised deductions from their salaries.

### **MOM was ready to help but workers took matters into their own hands**

2 MOM's records showed that Zhu and Wu had first visited MOM on 5 December 2012 to seek assistance with cancelling their work permits as they had resigned from their employment on 3 December 2012. They also informed the MOM officer that their employer had withheld their salaries and intended to make unauthorised deductions from their salaries.

3 The MOM officer explained that, under the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, the employer had up to seven days to cancel their work permits, settle any outstanding issues and arrange for the repatriation thereafter. MOM also needed relevant documents to properly assess the issues raised by the workers. The MOM officer therefore requested the workers to return after 10 December 2012 (seven days from the last day of work) if they still had issues with the employer, and to bring any supporting documents so that MOM could properly assess their claims.

4 Instead of following up on their 5 December visit, the workers took matters into their own hands and climbed atop two tower cranes the next day. When asked why they did not follow up on their visit to MOM, they explained that it was "troublesome".

5 MOM looked into Zhu's and Wu's complaints leading to their climbing the cranes, and found that their salaries were not yet due at the time of the 6 December 2012 incident. Their salaries had also previously been correctly paid based on the salary stated on their In-Principle Approval letter. Thus, **MOM's officers assessed that in respect of Zhu's and Wu's salary payments, there was no statutory breach of the Employment Act.**

### **MOM investigated housing issues raised by Zhu and Wu**

6 Zhu and Wu did not raise concerns over the housing standards of their dormitory during the visit to MOM on 5 December, or on 6 December. MOM only learned about this issue on 10 December, following media interest in the housing standards at the workers' quarters at Fishery Port Road. MOM conducted an inspection at this location at 11am on 12 December 2012 and found the housing conditions to be acceptable. The dormitory was cleaned twice a day and pest control activities carried out regularly. The workers that MOM interviewed as part of the inspection also shared with MOM inspectors that they had no complaints over accommodation. Notwithstanding this, MOM officers had informed the main contractor of the quarters on the areas for improvement and the need for workers to upkeep their living areas. Neither Zhu and Wu, nor the workers MOM interviewed, mentioned any problems with their previous housing at other locations. These were only surfaced by Zhu's and Wu's defence counsel during their mitigation in court, before they were sentenced in March 2013.

## Timeline of Events

5 Dec 2012	<p>Zhu Guilei (“Zhu”) and Wu Xiaolin (“Wu”) approached MOM for assistance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cancelling their work permits upon their resignation from their jobs on 3 Dec 2012</li><li>• Collecting their salaries</li><li>• Unauthorised deductions from their salaries</li></ul> <p>MOM officer explained that under the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, the employer had up to seven days to cancel their work permits and arrange for their repatriation.</p> <p>MOM also needed relevant documents to properly assess the issues raised. Thus, the officer requested that the workers return after 10 December 2012 (seven days from the last day of work), and to bring supporting documents so MOM can properly assess their claims.</p>
6 Dec 2012	<p>Zhu and Wu climbed up two tower cranes and refused to come down until they received their salaries.</p> <p>The two workers eventually climbed down from the crane after they were each paid \$2,000 on the spot, far more than their salaries for the month of November. They were immediately arrested by the police for <u>criminal trespass</u>.</p> <p><b>MOM’s investigations showed that their November salaries were not yet due for payment at the time of the incident and they had no outstanding salary arrears for previous months.</b></p>
10 Dec 2012	<p>MOM learned of possible infringements of foreign worker housing regulations at Zhu’s and Wu’s accommodation at Fishery Port Road through media interest.</p>
12 Dec 2012	<p>MOM inspected the dormitory and found that it met the regulatory requirements for foreign worker housing.</p> <p>MOM officers also spoke to foreign workers at the dormitory. They raised no concerns over cleanliness, pest control or overcrowding.</p> <p>MOM advised the main contractor of the dormitory on the areas for improvement.</p>
21 Mar 2013	<p>At the workers’ court hearing, defence counsel Ravinderpal Singh stated, as mitigation, that Zhu and Wu were made to live in accommodations such as a basement worksite infested with pests and a container that had no windows.</p> <p>Zhu and Wu were each sentenced to four weeks imprisonment.</p>