



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

May 3, 2017

Dylan Orr, Director
Seattle Office of Labor Standards
810 3rd Avenue, Suite 750
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Dylan Orr:

I am writing to ask you to open an investigation into Security Industry Specialists (SIS) for violating Seattle's labor laws protecting workers against workplace retaliation. It has come to my attention that SIS security officers Abdinasir Elmi and Betiel Desta were retaliated against, immediately after engaging in legally protected speech at a press conference on May 1, about their working conditions.

This is an unacceptable violation of workers' rights. On May 1, May Day, Elmi and Desta were part of a delegation that included faith leaders, security officers, and supporters who visited SIS's regional office and Amazon's headquarters to speak to SIS and Amazon management regarding issues in the workplace. Less than 24 hours later, Elmi reports he was removed from the scheduling system and Desta had her hours cut to zero. As you know, these retaliations come at the same time that SIS officers are working to form their union in response to unfair policies regarding religious practice, no cost of living raises, favoritism, and a lack of respect in the workplace.

Officers Elmi and Desta filed retaliation charges with the National Labor Relations Board against SIS, based on allegations that workers felt their hours were drastically cut, that SIS managers videotaped officers engaging in legally protected union activity in an intimidating manner, and that an officer was threatened with suspension because they spoke out to address their concerns to SIS.

As SIS officers guarding Amazon's campus for many years, Elmi and Desta have proved excellent at their jobs. With the support of labor and faith leaders, Elmi and Desta are correctly demanding their exact full-time positions they held before the retaliation began, including the same schedule and pay, back pay for lost wages, and a commitment that they will be able to go back to work immediately.

Please launch an investigation into SIS's adherence to labor standards in Seattle, and do what you can to defend the rights of Elmi and Desta. As you recall, the Office of Labor Standards investigated SIS in the past for violating the City's Safe and Sick Leave Law. That investigation

found that while SIS had not followed the law, the statute of limitations had elapsed, so there was no penalty on SIS or recompense for the workers. SIS has become a chronic violator of workers' rights, and has many times over earned the special attention of the Office of Labor Standards.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kshama Sawant', written in a cursive style.

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

CC: Tom Seltz and Jeff Bezos