

Chinese workers beat manager to death; farmers block highway

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Jilin, a large steel company to cut 30 thousand jobs as part of restructuring program, sparking workers protest. In Zhejiang approximately 30 thousand villagers blocked the highway accusing local authorities of corruption and pocketing compensation for expropriated lands.

The economic crisis in China is a powder keg ready to explode, for the terrible injustice against small farmers and workers. In Jilin workers attack and kill a manager, after the announcement of 30 thousand layoffs, at Shipu (Zhejiang) about 30 thousand residents block a highway, clashing with police, in protest against the corruption of local authorities, resulting in dozens injured and arrested.

According to the Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, the people of Shipu accuse local authorities of having pocketed money that was intended as compensation for their expropriated land, about 320 hectares for the firm Changguo Saltern. The farmers are protesting that the land is worth three times what they were offered. Meanwhile the authorities announced today that, for now, there will be no lay-offs from *Tonghua Iron and Steel Group*, in Jilin, industry leaders, after infuriated workers killed manager Chen Guojun.

The company had intended to cut 30 thousand jobs. On July 24, furious workers stopped production. According to sources quoted by the state-run *China Daily*, "Chen provoked the workers, saying that most of them were to be thrown out within 3 days". The workers brutally attacked him and then clashed with the police to prevent them from bringing Chen to the hospital. He died in hospital, where he was finally brought, later in the evening.

In China there were over 87 thousand mass protests in 2008 for economic reasons. According to experts, workers and farmers are deprived of adequate legal and judicial protection against the expropriation of land and job cuts. As a result the outbreak of violent protest is increasingly frequent. The police often intervened on behalf of local officials who remove land from peasants in return for low compensation, or in support of companies against the protests of workers.

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