

News

The Voice of the Workers: exploitation and workers' struggle in the Philippines



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Roba neta campaign by SETEM Catalunya in Barcelona.



Filipino workers after 6th June 2016.

Setem Catalunya promotes a documentary about the lack of basic rights in the Philippine-based factories that produce for big international electronic and textile companies.

“We the Filipino people are not stupid. This is the Philippines. Don’t act as if this were your country”. This claim opens *The Voice of the Workers*, a short documentary within [Setem’s Roba Neta \(Clean Clothes\) campaign](#).

On 2016, during the SETEM Catalunya Work Camp in Luzón, in the Philippines, some volunteer participants assembled under the name bubalus.org started to film *The Voice of the Workers*. The documentary lasts about 15 minutes and its main characters are female and male Filipino workers of the textile and electronic sectors.

Meagre salaries, lack of safety equipment, 12 hour working days, no holidays: in the video, Filipino workers explain their conditions without censorship —some of them slightly cover their faces. Behind big brands like Samsung, H&m, GAP, Adidas, Ralph Lauren, Panasonic or LG there are names that might be less familiar to us, as it is the case of **M. Ubis Company Incorporated**.

There is no globalization without externalization or segmented production. As one of the interviewed trade unionist states, this means Filipino workers produce electronic items separately, and so they don’t even get the chance to improve their technological skills and knowledge. There are no decent working conditions, and yet there are areas or Economic Zones which are entirely prohibited to the local people. In such areas, the only law is the one European, Korean and Japanese businessmen dictate: just as it was in Colonial times.

The Voice of the Workers, which was shown during the last Social Mobile Congress that took place in Barcelona on February 2018, is a SETEM Catalunya production partly funded by the [Catalan Agency of Support to Global Development](#). **Voice of C&F Mfg. Phils. Corp Workers** is the trade union that some Filipino factory workers created on June 6th 2016: the following day, all of them were fired — only to be readmitted afterwards, but that’s another story. In spite of the labour harassment, Filipino workers of the “Economic Zones” keep up their fight to face the non-written law of factories, a tacit policy strictly against trade unions and strikes. The documentary is

available on [SETEM Catalunya YouTube Channel](#) since April 6th.

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