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16,000 Security Workers are to get a long overdue pay rise

Security worker Francis O'Reilly writes about how him and fellow workers got organised to push for this.

Despite Minister of State Neale Richmond not yet signing off on the significant High Court statement on our pay rise (which is still a long way off our wage demand of € 15+ an hour!) this shows that when a small and determined number of workers get organised in a grassroots campaign like we did in "Security Officers United" you can force change.

Security Officers United had its first meeting back in February 2022 and organised its first protest outside the Dail in April 2022 to confront Top Security LTD - who were trying to block a small pay rise due to security workers. They took to the courts; we took to the streets!

We picketed at their head office out in Ballymount Business Park with families and friends. We let them hear our message loud and clear.

At no point did SIPTU, the biggest union that represents the security sector, ever express to me that they would show up and bring security officers from the union, but rank and file members showed up. Not with official SIPTU flags sadly.

With major union support our protests could have forced the likes of Top Security and other greedy bosses to back off sooner.

The one union that showed up from Day one was the Independent Workers Union (IWU) and many security officers were delighted with their constant support and advice if and when sought.

Further protests followed at FBD Insurance and Campus Ireland (Top Security LTD blue chip clients sites) - we had one client embarrassed to be associated with Emmett O'Rafferty who owns the three injunction companies (Top Security Ltd., Las Security Ltd & Morbary Ltd.) being informed by FBD top brass that the security working on their site were staying, but would be directly working for a Security Operator that would be paying better wages and benefits.

If the trade union bureaucrats in SIPTU/ICTU had backed our grassroots campaign, we have no doubt that protests would have brought the boss's injunction to a halt.

Where next for Security Officers United campaign?

We are going to put a manifesto together and push demands through weight of numbers to the security bosses and push for better wages, training, English/bilingual classes and show that we want to improve career development options and respect for labour laws and regulations.

People Before Profit and other progressive forces should set up grassroots campaigns in all the unions.

Shout out to Iceland Workers for showing support to Security workers!

People power combined with rank-and-file trade unionism can win victories for our class.

The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.

www.rednetwork.ie