

**FOXCONN PROTESTS IN ZHENGZHOU,
CHINA: A CASE STUDY IN
SOCIAL-LABOUR RELATIONS**

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Executive Summary

1. Lockdowns in Foxconn's Zhengzhou plant in China first occurred in October 2022 due to a surge in COVID cases; the sudden lockdown compelled many workers to return home.
2. Amidst these lockdowns, Apple had to confront supply chain disruptions (including at the Zhengzhou plant). It had publicly indicated that iPhone 14 deliveries will be affected for the important Christmas festive season, traditionally a critically important period for mass consumption in its large consumer markets.
3. To ramp up production, Foxconn recruitment agency stated that a Foxconn employee in their Zhengzhou Park plant can take home RMB30 (US\$4.18) hourly, with an additional 30-day attendance reward of RMB3,000 included in the monthly salary.
4. Approximately 70,000 individuals responded to Foxconn's re-employment drive, attracted by attractive salaries and subsidies.
5. On 23 November 2022, social media sources appeared to show hundreds of Foxconn workers confronting the police (some appeared to be decked out in anti-riot outfits) and security personnel in white hazmat suits with plastic shields on Foxconn grounds in Zhengzhou.
6. Some appeared to be protesting against Foxconn for not living up to its promise of dispensing returnee bonus or/and the four-fold salary increases after their resumption of work at the plant. Some workers became militant in their actions, smashing surveillance cameras and windows with sticks.
7. The Zhengzhou plant is a microcosm of the challenges facing operators that are attempting to strike an equilibrium between a zero-COVID policy and managing the frustrations of a lockdown. For multinational firms, it was a case of trying to

conform with governmental COVID-19 mitigation instructions and keeping their company operations going.

8. On 24 November 2022, Foxconn proactively mediated with the workers who were apparently misled by inaccurate information. It stated that pay would be dispensed in accordance with company procedures.
9. For Zhengzhou workers keen to leave the plant and return home, Foxconn indicated that it would “as always, fully respect the individual wishes of the workers and provide corresponding care subsidies for returning employees” while those who stay, Foxconn continues to provide “comprehensive support”.
10. On 29 November 2022, an editorial in *Xinhua* noted the pandemic “has had some impact on social production and life. In the face of complex changes in the pandemic, all localities and departments must be more patient and relieve the emotions of the people”.