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**ADDRESSING THE PANDEMIC AT AMAZON:
OPEN LETTER TO JEFF BEZOS AND STEFANO PEREGO**

Jeff Bezos and Stefano Perego:

Amazon Workers International is a cross-border coalition of Amazon warehouse employees from different shop floor organizations and countries, including Germany, Poland, Spain, France, Slovakia and the United States. We have been meeting regularly since 2015 to exchange information and coordinate actions like [Safe Package](#), about which you may have heard.

Our aim in writing this letter is twofold. First, we present a set of common demands, which also echo those recently put forth by [Amazon Employees for Climate Justice](#), an organization that unites higher tier workers at your corporate offices around the world. These demands include making permanent some of the positive changes that have been implemented in warehouses in recent weeks in response to workers' global pressure on company management, as well as increasing transparency around your protocols, job security and just cause for your workers, and cooperation with their organizations.

Second, however, we are not simply making demands for a future after the pandemic. Even as you move to revoke these temporary gains, we know on the ground that the crisis and contagion are far from having been contained. We see this reality among our coworkers who continue to get sick. We condemn Amazon for continuing to conceal the extent of exposure to coronavirus in its logistics network, for continuing to put lives at major risk while falsely branding itself as an essential company, and for firing and silencing workers who bravely stand up to its conduct. We call on you to end these practices now.

WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENTS

In March and April of this year, warehouse workers in various countries, including [Italy](#), [France](#), and

the [United States](#), walked away from their work stations to protest unsafe work conditions. In other countries, like [Germany](#), [Poland](#), and [Spain](#), shop floor organizations spoke out against the high risk of infection at the warehouses. Everywhere, workers took leaves of absence because they felt unsafe at work. These protests received [wide media attention](#). Under pressure from your tier 1 workers - and not before - company management started implementing changes.

We demand that Amazon:

- **Make permanent the wage increases.** Our labor made Jeff Bezos an extra \$24 billion in this period. The company's fortune grew as we worked, and continue to work, at great danger to ourselves, our families, our communities and society at large. In some places like Poland and Slovakia, our communities have no benefit at all from these risks, as the goods we process are shipped and sold in other countries. The company has thanked us in announcements and on bathroom stalls for our great contribution to keeping society running. It is thanks to us that the world did not collapse due to coronavirus. In return for this effort, we received a temporary wage increase that ranges from about \$0.90 to \$2 for every hour worked. But in the United States, you have already announced that you'll be retracting this increase on May 16, and it is unclear what you plan to do elsewhere. *We demand that these pay increases be made permanent, in recognition of the critical role we warehouse workers play and as a small piece of the great fortune we produced for the company.*
- **Make permanent the five minutes of extra break time.** Amazon added an extra 5 minutes to each of our breaks during the working day. Management argued that extra breaks are necessary so as to allow associates to adequately care for our health and safety. We always need enough time to take care of our personal health and safety. We agree that shorter breaks do not allow workers sufficient time for this. *Since safety is always the company's priority and not only during this time of pandemic, we demand that 5 minutes be added permanently to our break times.*
- **Make permanent the suspension of productivity feedback.** Seeing that making over 100% productivity rate does not go hand in hand with safe work conditions, Amazon suspended its feedback system (See Figure 1). Worker organizations have been pointing to this correlation for years. Having no more feedback allows workers to adequately care for our health and safety because we don't have to constantly worry about not working fast enough. It allows us to wash our hands as many times as we need, without worrying about being fired after getting negative feedback from our managers. Interestingly, even without this system that aims to squeeze as much labor out of us as possible, Amazon has made tons in profits. In March the entire FC in Poznan, POZ1, made between 100-104,9% of productivity rate. *Feedback only hampers our ability to stay safe on the job and thus should be suspended permanently.*

TRANSPARENCY AND COOPERATION

Despite a global pandemic, states of emergency in various countries where Amazon operates, millions of cases of infection, and over 200,000 deaths worldwide, the company refuses to release the total count of coronavirus infections in its warehouses. If compelled by local procedures or inquisitive media, the company releases information about infection in some warehouses but with days and sometimes weeks of delay. And unless forced by worker walkouts, it seems to be company policy that warehouses are never shutdown for thorough disinfection. Amazon does not consider unions to be partners in decision-making, and in effect we are kept in the dark about the company's crisis procedures and changes to work organization in these extraordinary circumstances. Finally, the company has outright misinformed public opinion about the types of products that are processed in the warehouses (See Figure 2-6). At no point

during the past weeks did the company actually reduce its operations to essential products. The company must abandon its cavalier attitude toward workers and the organizations that represent us.

We demand that Amazon:

- **Publicly disclose the company's protocol for tracking and reporting COVID-19 cases**, providing a list of confirmed and probable cases of infection and death among all full-time, part-time and contract workers, by facility.
- **Grant two weeks paid sick leave and extend the unlimited unpaid leave policy in the United States**, whose necessity will become clear once you make clear the level of exposure. Throughout these early months of the pandemic, workers there have been made to choose between their health and making rent. Now they will have to choose between their health and their job altogether. Demonstrate to us that your mass hires in these early months of the pandemic are not for the replacement of workers attempting to prioritize their help.
- **Bargain in good faith with unions to reach agreement on risk assessment and work organization**, especially in times of crisis. Amazon has recently been penalized by both the High Court of Nanterre in France and the Appellate Court of Versailles in France for not consulting worker representatives about safety in the workplace. This is a pervasive practice on the company's part in all of its warehouses. We demand that the company take worker representation seriously, especially when it comes to consulting changes in work organization and assessing the risks that are inherently associated with such changes. We demand that unions be included in the company's crisis management teams.
- **Publicly clarify the company's criteria for prioritizing essential shipments** throughout its global network, and **suspend deliveries of nonessential goods** in countries where it has not already.

JOB SECURITY AND JUST CAUSE

Amazon can afford to provide job security for all of its workers. Yet especially now, when warehouse work implies great risk of infection, the company is hiring thousands of workers with no job security whatsoever. Warehouses, which in the past did not subcontract workers through temp agencies are now doing so on two-week employment contracts. Workers who have month-long agency contracts and who dare take a day off because they feel sick are punished. If they are rehired at all, they tend to be hired on two-week contracts. Blue badge workers on fixed term contracts who take sick leave risk not getting their contracts renewed. Even your higher tier corporate office workers are at-will!

We demand that Amazon:

- **End all forms of casual and temporary employment.**

Finally, Amazon's retaliation against workers and its censorship is a gross misuse of power, and it is reinforced precisely by the lack of job security. Amazon must make it right with workers who were fired and make changes to ensure it doesn't happen again. Amazon must never silence workers who speak out on matters of life and death. The essential workers who run its digital and physical infrastructures deserve respect, not punishment, for speaking up and caring for each other.

We demand that Amazon:

- **Immediately reinstate any worker who was fired** based on selective enforcement of policies and behavior guidelines, and who wants their job back.
- **Change the solicitation and external communications policies** to not punish workers who are speaking up, in their own capacity and not on behalf of the company, about issues that directly impact the health and

safety of workers and customers, including pandemic working conditions, climate crisis, and pollution.

- **Commit to enforcing rules fairly and transparently**, including hearings before issuing discipline, providing substantial proof for discipline, not selectively enforcing rules, and making discipline proportional to the gravity and circumstances of the situation.

At a time when officials and employers are attempting to return to a false sense of normalcy, Amazon - which profited during this period - could set a standard of prioritizing the health of its workers and the public. Instead, you choose to continue leading the race to the bottom. We demand that you stop treating essential workers as disposable and that you start cooperating with those advocating otherwise. Stop firing and start listening.

**ON BEHALF OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
AMAZON WORKERS INTERNATIONAL**

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ATTACHMENTS

Figure 1 - Feedback Notice

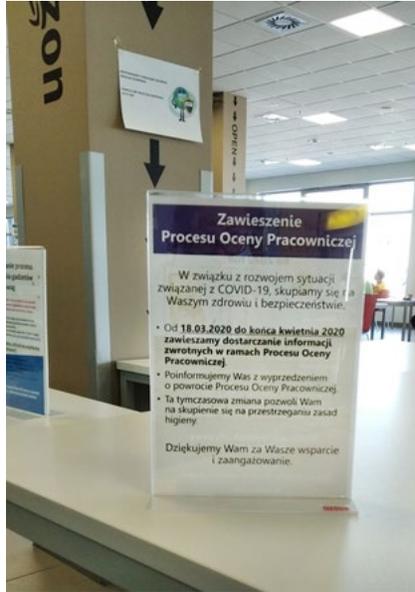


Figure 2 - Squid Costume, Pool Float



Figure 3 - Artificial Tulip Wreath



Figure 4 - Christmas Ornaments



Figure 5 - Handheld Steam Iron



Figure 6 - Disco Light

