

January 4, 2017
The Honorable
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Office of the Prime Minister
Tejgaon, Dhaka

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়
ডায়েরী নং: বিতরণ শাখা
তারিখ: ০৫/০১/১৭
সময়: ০৫:৩০

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,

As significant buyers of apparel and textile products from Bangladesh, we have been observing with great concern the recent labor unrest in Ashulia. Our companies have a long term commitment to sourcing from Bangladesh, under the conditions that the industry is in compliance with local labor laws and ILO conventions.

We are deeply concerned by recent detention of individuals with union affiliation and workers' rights advocates. We do not want to see anyone targeted and detained unjustly, and will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure workers' rights are upheld in Bangladesh's export-oriented garment sector.

Further, we remain concerned that the increased cost of living continues to contribute to unrest among workers in the garment sector. The garment sector is one of the leading foreign currency earning sectors in Bangladesh, and unrest among garment workers could cause damage to the reputation of Bangladesh as a reliable sourcing market. We strongly encourage the Government of Bangladesh to convene a wage board for the garment sector, as the signatories to this letter firmly believe adopting a regular wage review mechanism would help foster stability in the Bangladeshi garment sector. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you at greater length.

We do not support any illegal strikes or violent protests, nor do we believe that they are the correct way forward, but we recognize and do understand that the unrest among workers has become a reality, and that its root cause must be addressed through social dialogue. Further, our expectation is that labor rights related to freedom of association are fully adhered to and respected in compliance with the Bangladeshi Law and the ILO Conventions. As a consequence, the signatories of this document request the Government of Bangladesh take immediate steps to ensure the protection of the workers' rights, with special attention to the legitimate representatives of the workers who have been arrested.

We hope that this letter and our request are treated with high priority, and we look forward to swift action by the Bangladeshi Government regarding these urgent matters.

Sincerely,

Auchan
C&A
El Corte Ingles
Esprit
Gap Inc.
H&M
Hudson's Bay Company
Inditex
LC Waikiki
Li & Fung Ltd.
Lindex
Loblaw Companies Limited
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