

The Honourable Chief Advisor of Bangladesh
Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed

February 2nd 2008

Dear Dr Ahmed

As companies that buy apparel products from Bangladesh and as participants in the MFA Forum, we have been closely monitoring the 24th January arrest and detention of Mehedi Hasan, a labour rights investigator for the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC).

The MFA Forum is an open network of buyers, suppliers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, international institutions and multi-stakeholder initiatives that is building collaboration for sustainability in the textile and garments industry worldwide. We commend the Bangladesh government for your continuing engagement with the MFA Forum in addressing labour standards which has always contributed to maintaining the attractiveness of Bangladesh as a sourcing market.

We recognise the importance of, and rely on, cooperation amongst stakeholders to make corporate social responsibility a reality. Labour rights NGOs play an important role in highlighting issues on behalf of workers, and their reports often lead to dialogue from which all parties can benefit. This multi-stakeholder dialogue is an essential mechanism for promoting respect for labour rights in the workplace.

We urge the government to ensure that:

1. The circumstances surrounding Mr. Hasan's arrest are fully investigated;
2. All actions concerning Mr. Hasan are in accordance with the law and Mr. Hasan is provided with his right to legal representation;
3. There is no harassment of Mr Hasan, his family or his supporters and;
4. That the civil rights of all those involved in social responsibility are respected at all times.

It is important that we and other foreign buyers who conduct business in Bangladesh remain confident in the government's commitment to the rule of law.

We appreciate the attention to these concerns by the Government of Bangladesh. Given our deep interest in the promotion of responsible working conditions in Bangladesh, we will be following this matter and would welcome continuing dialogue.

Sincerely,

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