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Bangladesh: Business as Usual as Garment Brands Stall Progress

Brussels, 13 March 2015 (ITUC OnLine): International and European trade union bodies are calling on the European Union to bolster action on workers' rights and safety in Bangladesh's garment industry. The Bangladesh government has failed to implement vital labour law reforms, and a compensation fund for victims of the Rana Plaza disaster still remains US\$ 9 million short of the target.

The ITUC and ETUC, along with Global Union Federations UNI and IndustriALL and their European regional bodies, have jointly written to the European Commission calling on it to step up action as anti-union repression in Bangladesh increases and multinational companies in the garment sector hold off from contributing to the fund, leaving families of victims destitute.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "Europe has considerable influence through its trade ties with Bangladesh, and it needs to put that influence to good use, with Bangladesh and also with European companies. It also needs to go beyond old and failed corporate-led codes of conduct and monitoring schemes, and recognise that the solutions lie in industrial relations based on ILO standards, such as the landmark Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety."

On 12 March yet another factory collapsed, this time of a cement factory under construction, with several killed and many more trapped inside the ruins. The Global Union Federation for the construction sector, BWI, has made contact with the workers at the worksite to investigate the circumstances of the tragedy.

To read the joint letter to the European Commission: http://www.ituc-csi.org/joint-union-letter-to-eu-re?var_mode=calcul

To read the evaluation of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact: http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-ia-uni-evaulation-of-the?var_mode=calcul

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