

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine

Bangladesh: Government's Anti-Union Actions Prompt Complaint to ILO

Brussels, 25 April 2016 (ITUC OnLine): Three years after the Rana Plaza factory collapse killed over 1,200 workers, persistent and growing violations by the Bangladesh government of its responsibility to respect workers' rights have led the ITUC to lodge a Freedom of Association case at the International Labour organisation. With the Registrar of Trade Unions refusing legitimate registration applications for unions in the garment and other sectors, workers are being deprived of their right to collective representation, and local employers continue to repress union activity with impunity.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "While the Bangladesh Accord <<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/3-years-rana-plaza-bangladesh-accord-saving-lives>> is saving lives, the authorities are still colluding with local factory bosses to repress workers' rights. Few employers have agreed to bargain with registered trade unions for decent pay and conditions. The government continues to show callous indifference to the very people who contribute most to the economy, putting key export markets at risk."

The case, which will be heard by the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association, details how the government has rejected nearly 75 per cent of union registrations in 2015 for spurious reasons, sought the dissolution of existing unions, and stood idly by when factory management have engaged in union-busting in contravention of the Bangladesh Labour Act and criminal law. Some union leaders have been beaten and hospitalised, while in other cases all the members of union executive boards have been sacked.

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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