

National Garments Workers Federation

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**Garment workers' procession demanding
Ensure 'Safe Workplace' & "Trade Union Rights" in Garment industry**

Garment workers Yesterday , January 14, 2013, brought out a procession in Dhaka city demanding assurance for 'safe workplace' & " trade union rights " in Garment industry in Bangladesh. Over 100 garment workers, mostly women, took part in the procession organized by National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF). The workers, during the procession, carried placard & festoons on different demands, including 'safe workplace' & trade union rights. The procession began from in front of the National Press Club and concluded at the Paltan Crossing after parading High Court and Topkhana Road.

A short rally was held in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka city before the procession. NGWF President Amirul Haque Amin presided over the rally that was addressed by NGWF General Secretary Ms Safia Parveen & Central leaders Md Faruq Khan, Ms Sultana Akter, Ms Jesmin Akter, Md Kabir Hossain, Ms Nazneen Akter and Md Rafiq, among others.

The speakers said that 55 serious factory fires taken place in Bangladesh Garment sector since 1990. In these fires, 566 garment workers were killed while several thousands were injured—some of them became permanently retarded physically. Besides, 64 garment workers were killed in Spectrum Garments factory collapse in 2005. But, 'safe workplace' and health & safety for garment workers were not ensured till now.

The speakers demanded to establish 'safe workplace' in Garment industry for the workers. They stressed the need for joint initiative of the factory owners, government, buyers and trade union organization in this regard.

Expressing resentment, the speakers said, " A 'Memorandum of Understanding on Health & Safety' was prepared two years back at a workshop, organized by jointly by BGMEA & trade union organizations. The workshop was attended by the representatives of the government and buyers. It was decided, at the workshop, that all buyers (sourcing companies) shall sign the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Health & Safety'. But till now, no buyers other than PVH & TCHIBO signed this document. It is imperative for all buyers to sign this document and ensure health & safety of the garment workers in Bangladesh."

Expressing anger, the speakers said, " Formation of trade union organization is allowed in the garment sector although trade union right is a basic right of the workers. Unrestricted trade union rights should be given immediately in the Garment sector."

Press Secretary, NGWF

January 15, 2013.