

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

June 19, 2013

Dear Secretary Kerry,

More than 1,250 garment workers have been killed in the Tazreen fire, the Rana Plaza building collapse, and several other garment industry disasters in Bangladesh since last November. Fortunately, there is a solution to help put an end to horrors like these that have plagued Bangladeshi garment workers for twenty years.

The solution is the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which now has fifty signatories, representing brands and retailers from a dozen countries, with presence in more than 1,000 factories in Bangladesh. However, only five of these are U.S. companies, Abercrombie & Fitch, PVH (owner of Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein), Sean John Apparel, Scoop NYC, and Zac Posen.

As U.S. labor, human rights organizations, religious groups, responsible investors, and other concerned organizations, **we urge you to publicly support the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, and to call on U.S. brands and retailers to sign on immediately.** The actions of U.S. companies abroad are inevitably seen as an expression of the values that the country holds. Making a clear commitment to workers' safety and rights and transparency, as the Accord does, would send the right message about U.S. concerns.

The Accord is a legally-binding agreement between the companies and the IndustriALL Global Union, the UNI Global Union, and Bangladeshi unions. It includes all of the components essential to be effective: independent safety inspections with public reports, mandatory factory building renovations, the obligation by brands and retailers to underwrite the cost of repairs, and a vital role for workers and their unions in protecting their own safety.

The Accord is a significant departure from companies' non-binding and confidential social compliance programs that sideline workers and trade unions, and have failed to protect workers from mortal workplace dangers. It will succeed in protecting workers when major U.S. brands and retailers join the program.

The Accord enjoys widespread support, including among U.S. Representatives and Senators, the European Parliament, the United Nations, and the International Labour Organization.

Finally, we believe it is in the interest of the U.S. government and, in fact, all Americans to have U.S. companies not only step up to accept their responsibilities in the wake of this

tragedy, but also to be seen as leaders in developing effective assurances for worker safety going forward. This is essential if the Bangladeshi garment industry is to be a path to both economic and human development for Bangladesh, a critical ally for the U.S. in the region.

We will very much appreciate your prompt attention to this important matter. For more information, please visit <http://laborrights.org/safetyaccord> or contact Judy Gearhart (judy@ilrf.org, 202-347-4100 x106).

Sincerely,

National and international organizations

AFL-CIO

Amalgamated Transit Union

American Federation of Teachers

Amnesty International USA

Aquinas Associates

Avaaz

Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

Calvert Investment Management, Inc.

Change to Win

Citizens Trade Campaign

Clean Clothes Campaign

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Congregation of St. Joseph

Communications Workers of America

Corporate Action Network

Dominican Sisters of Hope

Ethix Ventures Inc.

Everence Financial and the Praxis Mutual Funds

Fair World Project

First Affirmative Financial Network

Friends Fiduciary Corporation

Global Exchange

Green America

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

International Labor Rights Forum

Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

Jobs with Justice/American Rights at Work

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mercy Investment Services, Inc.

National Consumers League

Natural Investments Llc

Organic Consumers Association
Oxfam America
Portfolio 21
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights
Servants of the Paraclete
Service Employees International Union
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Justice Team
Social(k)
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province
SumOfUs
Sustainable Equity Value Ltd
SweatFree Communities
The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ, Inc.
The Sustainability Group of Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
UNITE HERE
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)
United Food and Commercial Workers
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United Steelworkers
United Students Against Sweatshops
United Workers Congress
Veris Wealth Partners
Wespath Investment Management
Worker Rights Consortium
Workers United (SEIU)
Xaverian Brothers

State/local/regional organizations

Administrative Team, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Benedictine Sisters, San Antonio, Texas
Benedictine Sisters of Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore, Maryland
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters from Reading, Pennsylvania
CODEPINK State of Maine
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
Diocese of Springfield, Illinois
Dominican Sisters of Houston, Texas
Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois
El Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
Food AND Medicine
Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls Justice Commission, Minnesota
Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State

Leadership Council of the Sinsinawa Dominicans
Lehigh Valley Gas Truth
Lighthouse Hospice
Linda Jacobs Financial Services
Maine AFL-CIO
Maine Green Independent Party
Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus
Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition
New England Jewish Labor Committee
New England Province of the Society of Jesus
New York Province of the Society of Jesus
North East Scotland Pension Fund
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
OLLU Center for Women in Church and Society
Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine
Power in Community Alliances (PICA)
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Providence – Mother Joseph Province Leadership Team
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt New York
Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa
Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, Minnesota
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet – St. Louis Province
Sisters of the Holy Cross Congregation Justice Committee, Notre Dame, Indiana
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Order of St. Dominic
Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM, Aberdeen, South Dakota
Socially Responsible Investment Coalition
The Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts

cc: Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs,
US Department of State
Dan Mozena, US Ambassador to Bangladesh
Karen Hanrahan, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and
Labor, US Department of State
Barbara Shailor, Special Representative for International Labor Affairs, US Department
of State