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Bangladesh

Garment workers, symbolic hunger strike held

- News from around the world -

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Demands: immediate arrest and trial of Tazreen Fashion's owner and other culprits of factory fire, payment of wages-allowances and compensation to 15,000 workers of Hallmark Group, placing and passing in Parliament the amendment to Labour welfare foundation act and Labour law, establishing safe workplaces in garment sector, and implementation of free trade union rights.

Several hundred garment workers observed a symbolic hunger strike today, January 4, 2013 demanding immediate arrest and trial of Tazreen Fashion's owner and other culprits for responsibility in killing of 112 workers in factory fire, payment of wages-allowances and compensation to 15,000 workers of Hallmark Group, placing and passing in Parliament the amendment to Labour welfare foundation act and Labour law, establishing safe workplaces in garment sector, and implementation of free trade union rights. Organized by National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), the symbolic hunger strike was held in front of National Press Club in Dhaka city from 11:00am to 12:00 noon.

NGWF President Amirul Haque Amin presided over the program which was addressed by General Secretary Ms Safia Parveen, central leader Md Faruk Khan and Ms Sultana Akter.

General Secretary of Workers Party of Bangladesh Comrade Anisur Rahman Mallick, Coordinator of SKOP Dr Wazedul Islam Khan, former General Secretary of Jatiya Sramik League and Chairman of BNC Babu Roy Romesh, Babul Akter, Md Rafiq, Jahanara Begum and Mohammad Ali addressed the program expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers.

1. The NGWF at the program warned to announce to submit memorandum to Home Ministry if all culprits, including owner of Tazreen Fashion, are not arrested immediately for their responsibility in killing 112 garment workers in factory on November 24,2012. The speakers demanded publication of list of workers, who were killed in Tazreen fire, arrangement of proper medical treatment for the injured and payment of compensation on the basis of Å’Loss of earnings,.

2. The speakers demanded immediate payment wages, allowances & compensation to 15,000 workers of Hallmark Group, which the owners closed down sine die on October 10, 2012. The owner of Hallmark Group was arrested for a massive bank scam through which he squandered taka 27 billion bank money. In case of non-compliance of the demand, memorandum will be submitted to concerned ministries, including the Labour Ministry.

3. From the program, the Government was urged to place & pass in Parliament the amendment to the Labour Welfare Foundation Act 2006 since the law was incomplete.

4. The Government was also urged to place and pass in Parliament the amendment to the Bangladesh Labour Law 2006. The workers will be forced to announce tougher action program if the amendments to the laws were not carried out accordingly.

5. The speakers demanded from the program that factory owners, Government, BGMEA and buyers should ensure safe workplace, in garment sector so that not a single worker dies in factory fire or accident in the future. Besides, all foreign companies, who source RMG products from Bangladesh, should sign the memorandum of understanding on health& safety.

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6. Stressing the need for accepting trade union rights as a basic right of the Garment workers, the program demanded implementation to this demand.

Press Secretary, NGWF

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