

## Complaint – Takko Fashion – Bangladesh

### Status: Resolved

*FWF is responsible for setting up a complaints procedure in production countries where FWF is active. The complaints procedure allows third parties to make complaints about the working conditions or the way the Code of Labour Practices is implemented in factories which supply FWF members.*

*The responsibility of FWF includes investigating the complaint, verifying whether the agreed corrective action plan is implemented and public reporting. This complaint report gives an overview of a complaint filed to FWF, the investigation and agreed corrective action plan as well as how the outcome is verified. For more information on the complaints procedure see the FWF website. FWF also publishes an overview of complaints received in its annual reports.*

### 1. Affiliate involved

Takko Fashion

### 2. Accused party

A factory located in Bangladesh supplying Takko Fashion.

### 3. Date of receiving complaint

29 October 2013

### 4. Filing party

A group of workers who recently fired by the factory at the time of receiving the complaint.

### 5. The complaint

The complainants claimed that on 27 October 2013 all workers started demonstration against the factory because of high level of abuse and harassment, and high risk of fire safety. They concerned about the safety situation in the factory. The workers worried that they could not escape in case of fire. In addition, the workers did not have legal benefits such as service benefits. There had been a conflict between the factory workers and the management. A number of workers and some management staff were injured.

The above claims from workers were investigated by FWF local team and the results were written on Chapter 8 in this report.

## 6. Admissibility

FWF decided that the case is admissible on 30 October 2013.

The factory is an active supplier of Takko Fashion, an affiliate of FWF.

The case is relevant to the following labour standards of FWF's Code of Labour

Practices:

- No discrimination
- Safety and healthy working environment
- Payment of a living wage

## 7. Investigation

From 30 October to 7 November two FWF workers interviewers met with eleven workers to discuss the situation, and four other workers were interviewed over telephone by FWF liaison officer. Testimonies were taken from three witnesses: duty officer of industrial police, a tea-stall owner and Mr. Mahbubur Rahman Ismail, General Secretary, Bangladesh textile and garment workers federation, who observed and supported the demonstration closely.

FWF informed Takko Fashion on 30 October and requested the company to contact its supplier. Takko Fashion reacted to the case immediately. On 1 November, the supplier confirmed that there had been a protest and the factory had shut down temporary for that reason. FWF liaison officer met with the factory owner. The factory cooperated with FWF on the investigation.

## 8. Findings and conclusions

The investigation showed that there had been a violent demonstration of workers. The conflict between workers and factory management started in 2012. Workers informed factory management about the risk of fire and safety and high level of verbal abuse and harassment in factory. In about eight month time since the workers started collectively bargaining with management, harassment went high and finally a group of workers could not help to start violent protest.

After the violent protest, about nine persons were injured, four of them were workers and five of them were from the management. A police case was filed against 98 workers for attacking management and damaging factory property. These 98 workers were fired by the factory.

The audit found out that there were a number of health and safety issues, which have high priority to be fixed. The factory is under the Bangladesh Accord and has promised to share the Accord audit report and remediation plan once it is audited.

## 9. Remediation

In November, a formal investigation and hearing of accused workers was led by the factory management and owner facilitated by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). In December, workers' claims and demands were negotiated in the presence of Bangladesh textile and garment workers federation.

Takko Fashion organised a meeting for FWF liaison officer and the factory owner to discuss the followup. The factory owner said that he had investigated internally and fired two top management members who were accused by workers of being abusive. He has requested FWF to implement the Workplace Education Programme at this factory and plus another factory that also owned by him. The other factory also supplies to Takko Fashion. In addition, FWF will help the factory to organise a human resource management training.

The factory management will follow up on the corrective action plans of the audit, especially the parts on occupational health and safety.

The factory owner did not want to reinstate the 98 workers who went on demonstration. He would pay compensations according to the agreement made during the negotiation with the presence of a union.

## 10. Verification

Dismissed workers were interviewed. They confirmed receiving an amount of money that was in accordance with the law. The FWF audit also confirmed that the records and documented in the factory showed that due compensations were paid to 98 workers. The workers commented that the negotiation went well, where workers had a chance to express and defend themselves. Consequently, the dismissed workers have received some extent money which is more that the legally stipulated service benefits in case of dismissal.

The police case against 98 workers has been withdrawn after the union observed negotiation.

FWF plans the following activities to verify the outcomes of the complaint in 2014:

- An audit to assess improvements on labour standards, especially on occupational health and safety in the last quarter
- Follow-up workers interviews and union interviews to monitor the situation regularly
- Interviews with factory top management members regularly
- Training on human resource management before October
- Implement the programme on anti-harassment at work in the first half year and evaluate the results in the last quarter
- Acquire the audit report of the Accord from the factory management and request remediation plan. The timeframe is depending on the Accord audit agenda. FWF expects the report will be available by August.

## 11. Evaluation by the complainant

The complainants were generally satisfied with the outcome. They were looking forward to FWF's training on presentation of harassment at work.