



April 18, 2012

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed
Prime Minister's Office
Bangladesh

RE: Request for investigation into the death of Mr. Aminul Islam Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS)

Dear Prime Minister:

On behalf of the U.S., Canadian, and European apparel, retail, licensing, and footwear industries, the undersigned associations that represent those sectors have read with great concern the news of the untimely death of Mr. Aminul Islam of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS).

Our member companies value the relationship our industries have with the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh. Trade in the RMG sector has steadily risen over the last two decades, making Bangladesh today one of the largest suppliers of apparel to the United States, Canada, and Europe.

We are deeply concerned about this incident because the apparent circumstances leading up to and surrounding Mr. Islam's death could be perceived to be part of a deliberate campaign to repress efforts to raise and address issues related to unsatisfactory working conditions in the RMG sector.

As the associations representing buyers in the United States, Canada, and Europe, we are strongly committed to ethical production of consumer products in Bangladesh and everywhere around the world. As such, we respectfully request that your government:

- Conduct a comprehensive, impartial, and swift investigation into the death of Mr. Islam in order to identify any perpetrator(s) and the circumstances of this incident;
- Hold accountable any person or persons found guilty of wrongdoing in connection with the death of Mr. Islam;
- Continue to uphold and strengthen Bangladesh's laws, which respect the lawful actions of those individuals and organizations promoting improved working conditions and recognize that unjust arrest and detention of any person, and torture under any circumstance, is unacceptable; and
- Expand the government's commitment to improve working conditions in the RMG sector through collaboration with global brands, industry trade associations, civil society, labor unions, and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Again, the undersigned associations, and the thousands of buyers in the United States, Canada, and Europe we represent, strongly value the mutually beneficial relationship that has developed over the last two decades with the RMG sector in Bangladesh. At the same time, our members are committed to sourcing and/or licensing consumer products in a responsible manner that respects human and worker rights.

We look forward to your response to these matters.

Sincerely,

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI-EU)
Foreign Trade Association (FTA-EU)
International Licensing Industry Merchandisers'
Association (LIMA-US)
National Retail Federation (NRF-US)
Nordic Initiative Clean and Ethical (NICE)

Norwegian Fashion Institute
Retail Council of Canada (RCC)
Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA-US)
Social Accountability International (SAI)
Svensk Handel (Swedish Trade Association)
United States Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel
(USA-ITA)

CC:

- The Honourable Ghulam Muhammed Quader, Bangladesh Minister of Commerce
- The Honourable Mosharraf Hossain, Bangladesh Minister of Labour & Employment and Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment
- The Honourable Ghulam Hussain, Secretary of Commerce
- His Excellency Mr. Akramul Qader, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the United States
- Md. Shafiul Islam (Mohiuddin), President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
- Mr. A.K.M. Salim Osman, President, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)
- Mr. A Gafur, Executive Director, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh
- Shabbir Ahmed Chowdhury, Chairman, U.S. Bangladesh Advisory Council (USBAC)