



Asia Floor Wage Alliance

AFWA Stands in Solidarity with the 1,461 Garment Workers Left Unemployed by the Sudden Closure of Next Manufacturing Pvt Ltd

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We at Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) stand in unwavering solidarity with the 1,461 workers whose jobs were unjustly terminated due to the sudden closure of Next Manufacturing Pvt Ltd in the in the Katunayake Free Trade Zone, Sri Lanka.

On 19 May 2025, after completing their shifts — workers were informed late in the evening via WhatsApp that the factory would be permanently closed and sealed the very next day. No advance warning was given. No proper procedure was followed. As a result, workers—many of them women, older workers, and primary income earners—have been left without jobs, income, or recourse in an already difficult economic climate.

This is an outright denial of workers' legal rights, and a calculated attempt to evade responsibility. The factory had a collective bargaining agreement in place—yet management bypassed it entirely, later claiming it is “not a legal document.” The company failed to submit the legally required termination application under the Termination of Employment of Workmen (Special Provisions) Act until after the closure had already taken place. Rather than acknowledging this violation, NEXT management has offered shifting justifications: from blaming financial losses to vaguely citing “subversive activity.”

The aftermath has brought with it psychological distress, disruption to childcare, workers over the age of 50 finding it very difficult to find employment, and growing fear—especially as reports emerge of workers being coerced into signing pre-written resignation letters under threat of losing their compensation.



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We are closely following these developments and echo the demands of the workers: immediate, full compensation and access to re-employment opportunities—especially for older workers and those in specialized roles now facing limited prospects.

We reject any model of industrial development where brands and suppliers can cut loose their workforce without accountability. Workers are not disposable. They are the foundation of this industry, and they have the right to stable jobs, respect, and justice.

We stand in solidarity with workers and unions in Sri Lanka—and we will not look away.