Asia Floor Wage Alliance - Bangladesh

Stop Attacks, Harassment, False Cases and Arrests of Garment Workers!

November 2026

Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) strongly condemns the ongoing attacks, intimidation, arrests, and criminalization of garment workers and trade union leaders amid their collective mobilization demanding a minimum wage increase. We call on the government, employers, and all relevant authorities to take immediate, concrete measures to end the repression and to respond to workers' demands through dialogue and justice. Over the past week thousands of garment workers have taken to the streets in key industrial areas in Ashulia, Gazipur, Mirpur and Savar to demand the formation of the Minimum Wage Board and a **minimum wage of BDT 30,000**. What began as legitimate protest over wages and rights violations has been met with attacks, harassment, arrests and false cases against workers and trade union leaders.

Among the workers and union leaders arrested for participating in collective action are Mostafa Kamal and Rozina Akter Sumi. Mostafa Kamal is a member of the AFWA-Bangladesh National Committee and Vice President of the Central Committee of the Bangladeshi Garments Trade Union Federation. Rozina Akter Sumi is a member of the AFWA-Bangladesh Women's Leadership Committee and Education and Training Secretary of the Green Bangla Garments Workers Federation. They are being punished, not for any crime, but for standing with workers raising legitimate wage demands. They must be released immediately and unconditionally, and all false cases against them withdrawn, along with those against the following trade union leaders:

- **Md. Ali Azgar, President, Gazipur District Garments Tailors Workers Federation**
- **Md. Morshed Alam Kawsar, President, Gazipur Setu, Bangladesh Garments Workers and Employees Federation**
- **Md. Fuadur Rahman Nirjon, Admin, KJK Facebook Group of Gazipur Garments Workers**

Garment workers have struggled for years under rising living costs, soaring commodity prices, increasing house rents, and growing expenses for healthcare and education. Their wages do not cover the most basic needs of their families. Instead of addressing these grievances, workers who raise legitimate concerns are met with blacklisting, unlawful dismissal, manipulation of grades, unpaid overtime, physical and psychological abuse, and denial of benefits they are legally entitled to. Their rights to organize freely, form trade unions, freedom of association and collective bargaining are routinely obstructed. Throughout the recent protests, workers have faced intimidation, arrest, and fabricated

criminal cases simply for raising their voices. The ongoing unrest is not solely about wages: it is rooted in years of accumulated deprivation, discrimination, and denial of workers' rights, now intensified by uncertainty over the wage revision process.

Ensuring fair wages and workers' rights is not an act of charity or generosity; it is a legal and fundamental human right. The garment industry has reached its present position through the labor and contributions of millions of workers. Therefore, workers' rights must never be undermined in the name of protecting the interests of the industry. Recognizing workers' legitimate demands, ensuring their safety and resolving disputes through constructive dialogue are the only sustainable ways to restore industrial stability and maintain a peaceful working environment.

Repression cannot restore stability. Attacks, false cases, and mass arrests will only deepen fear, anger, and mistrust among workers and prolong the disruption to production on which the industry depends. The garment industry is a major pillar of Bangladesh's economy, export earnings and employment. Its long-term stability depends on ensuring workers' rights, dignity, safety, and a decent standard of living.

Raising legitimate demands and expressing the right to freedom of assembly and participating in collective action must never be treated as criminal activities. Instead of arresting and harassing trade union leaders to suppress workers' movements, the authorities should engage with them through dialogue to resolve the ongoing problems.

International fashion brands sourcing from Bangladesh must not remain silent as workers and trade union leaders face repression for demanding decent wages. Brands must set clear expectations for suppliers against retaliation and anti-union practices, respect workers' freedom of association, and ensure their purchasing practices support meaningful wage increases rather than intensifying downward pressure on labor costs.

We therefore make the following demands:

- The immediate and unconditional release and withdrawal of false cases against those arrested in connection with their efforts to organize, represent workers and collectively demand higher minimum wages.
- Finalize the revised minimum wage by December 2026 with serious and due consideration of workers' demands.
- An immediate end to all attacks, intimidation, harassment and criminalization against workers and trade union members.
- Respect for and protection of freedom of association, including the right to organize, assemble and engage in collective bargaining.
- Accountability for those responsible for attacks and violations against workers and trade union members.