

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

June 19, 2013

Dear Secretary Kerry,

More than 1,250 garment workers have been killed in the Tazreen fire, the Rana Plaza building collapse, and several other garment industry disasters in Bangladesh since last November. Fortunately, there is a solution to help put an end to horrors like these that have plagued Bangladeshi garment workers for twenty years.

The solution is the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which now has fifty signatories, representing brands and retailers from a dozen countries, with presence in more than 1,000 factories in Bangladesh. However, only five of these are U.S. companies, Abercrombie & Fitch, PVH (owner of Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein), Sean John Apparel, Scoop NYC, and Zac Posen.

As U.S. labor, human rights organizations, religious groups, responsible investors, and other concerned organizations, **we urge you to publicly support the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, and to call on U.S. brands and retailers to sign on immediately.** The actions of U.S. companies abroad are inevitably seen as an expression of the values that the country holds. Making a clear commitment to workers' safety and rights and transparency, as the Accord does, would send the right message about U.S. concerns.

The Accord is a legally-binding agreement between the companies and the IndustriALL Global Union, the UNI Global Union, and Bangladeshi unions. It includes all of the components essential to be effective: independent safety inspections with public reports, mandatory factory building renovations, the obligation by brands and retailers to underwrite the cost of repairs, and a vital role for workers and their unions in protecting their own safety.

The Accord is a significant departure from companies' non-binding and confidential social compliance programs that sideline workers and trade unions, and have failed to protect workers from mortal workplace dangers. It will succeed in protecting workers when major U.S. brands and retailers join the program.

The Accord enjoys widespread support, including among U.S. Representatives and Senators, the European Parliament, the United Nations, and the International Labour Organization.

Finally, we believe it is in the interest of the U.S. government and, in fact, all Americans to have U.S. companies not only step up to accept their responsibilities in the wake of this

tragedy, but also to be seen as leaders in developing effective assurances for worker safety going forward. This is essential if the Bangladeshi garment industry is to be a path to both economic and human development for Bangladesh, a critical ally for the U.S. in the region.

We will very much appreciate your prompt attention to this important matter. For more information, please visit <http://laborrights.org/safetyaccord> or contact Judy Gearhart ([judy@ilrf.org](mailto:judy@ilrf.org), 202-347-4100 x106).

Sincerely,

National and international organizations

AFL-CIO

Amalgamated Transit Union

American Federation of Teachers

Amnesty International USA

Aquinas Associates

Avaaz

Bernardine Franciscan Sisters

Calvert Investment Management, Inc.

Change to Win

Citizens Trade Campaign

Clean Clothes Campaign

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Congregation of St. Joseph

Communications Workers of America

Corporate Action Network

Dominican Sisters of Hope

Ethix Ventures Inc.

Everence Financial and the Praxis Mutual Funds

Fair World Project

First Affirmative Financial Network

Friends Fiduciary Corporation

Global Exchange

Green America

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

International Labor Rights Forum

Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

Jobs with Justice/American Rights at Work

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mercy Investment Services, Inc.

National Consumers League

Natural Investments Llc

Organic Consumers Association  
Oxfam America  
Portfolio 21  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights  
Servants of the Paraclete  
Service Employees International Union  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Justice Team  
Social(k)  
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province  
SumOfUs  
Sustainable Equity Value Ltd  
SweatFree Communities  
The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ, Inc.  
The Sustainability Group of Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
UNITE HERE  
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)  
United Food and Commercial Workers  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United Steelworkers  
United Students Against Sweatshops  
United Workers Congress  
Veris Wealth Partners  
Wespath Investment Management  
Worker Rights Consortium  
Workers United (SEIU)  
Xaverian Brothers

State/local/regional organizations

Administrative Team, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi  
Benedictine Sisters, San Antonio, Texas  
Benedictine Sisters of Atchison, Kansas  
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore, Maryland  
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters from Reading, Pennsylvania  
CODEPINK State of Maine  
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin  
Diocese of Springfield, Illinois  
Dominican Sisters of Houston, Texas  
Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois  
El Frente Auténtico del Trabajo  
Food AND Medicine  
Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls Justice Commission, Minnesota  
Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State

Leadership Council of the Sinsinawa Dominicans  
Lehigh Valley Gas Truth  
Lighthouse Hospice  
Linda Jacobs Financial Services  
Maine AFL-CIO  
Maine Green Independent Party  
Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus  
Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice  
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice  
Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment  
Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition  
New England Jewish Labor Committee  
New England Province of the Society of Jesus  
New York Province of the Society of Jesus  
North East Scotland Pension Fund  
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment  
OLLU Center for Women in Church and Society  
Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine  
Power in Community Alliances (PICA)  
Sisters of Charity of New York  
Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine  
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Sisters of Providence – Mother Joseph Province Leadership Team  
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt New York  
Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa  
Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross  
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, Minnesota  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet – St. Louis Province  
Sisters of the Holy Cross Congregation Justice Committee, Notre Dame, Indiana  
Sisters of the Humility of Mary  
Sisters of the Order of St. Dominic  
Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM, Aberdeen, South Dakota  
Socially Responsible Investment Coalition  
The Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts

cc: Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs,  
US Department of State  
Dan Mozena, US Ambassador to Bangladesh  
Karen Hanrahan, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and  
Labor, US Department of State  
Barbara Shailor, Special Representative for International Labor Affairs, US Department  
of State