



2024 UNIVERSITY CAUCUS ANNUAL MEETING

May 9, 2024

Welcome



**Why are
enforceable
university
labor
standards
necessary?**



WORKER RIGHTS
CONSORTIUM



Global Apparel Industry

30 million workers
80% women



Collegiate Apparel Sector

2% of the business
up to 10% of the factories

Collegiate Apparel Production



China



Vietnam



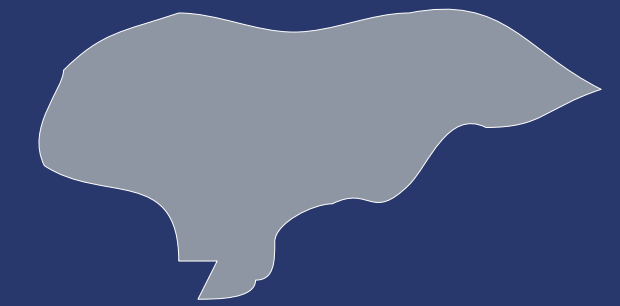
Mexico



India



Pakistan



Honduras



Cambodia



Indonesia



Bangladesh

Weak labor law enforcement

Factories can use illegal means to cut cost

Result: Lots of labor rights violations

**Voluntary
Self-
Regulation
Doesn't
Work**

In America

BOB HERBERT

Sweatshop U.

Kenia Rodríguez, a 19-year-old sweatshop worker from the Dominican Republic, will almost certainly be fired for speaking out. But she feels the matter is important enough to risk it.

Ms. Rodríguez works in a huge factory complex in a free-trade zone near Santo Domingo that turns out baseball caps with the names and logos of major American universities, including Harvard, Notre Dame, Georgetown, U.C.L.A. and the University of North Carolina.

The caps, which are extremely popular, sell for about \$20 each in the United States. The universities, through licensing agreements, make about \$1.50 per cap. Apparel companies, like Champion and Starter, that market the caps make a bundle from them. So do retailers. When all the big shots finally finish pocketing their shares, very little is left for the workers who actually make the caps.

According to a study to be released this week by a labor union in the U.S., only about 8 cents from each \$20 cap is allocated for workers' wages. Ms. Rodríguez said during an interview on Friday that she is paid about \$28 for a 44-hour week, which is the minimum wage in the Dominican Republic. Even with a dozen hours of overtime, she only makes about \$40, she said. When I asked if that was enough for her to live on, she laughed.

"Not even half," she said through an interpreter.

So the workers live in poverty, even though the factory complex, run by a Korean-owned firm called BJ&B, is one of the most successful suppliers of baseball caps in the world. In addition

of caps made at BJ&B. Their tour is being sponsored by the union. Their first stop will be Harvard on Tuesday.

There are approximately 2,000 employees in the BJ&B complex, which is in the town of Villa Altagracia. Ms. Rodríguez and Mr. Reyes said supervisors frequently yell at the workers, make degrading comments, hit them and touch the women and girls inappropriately.

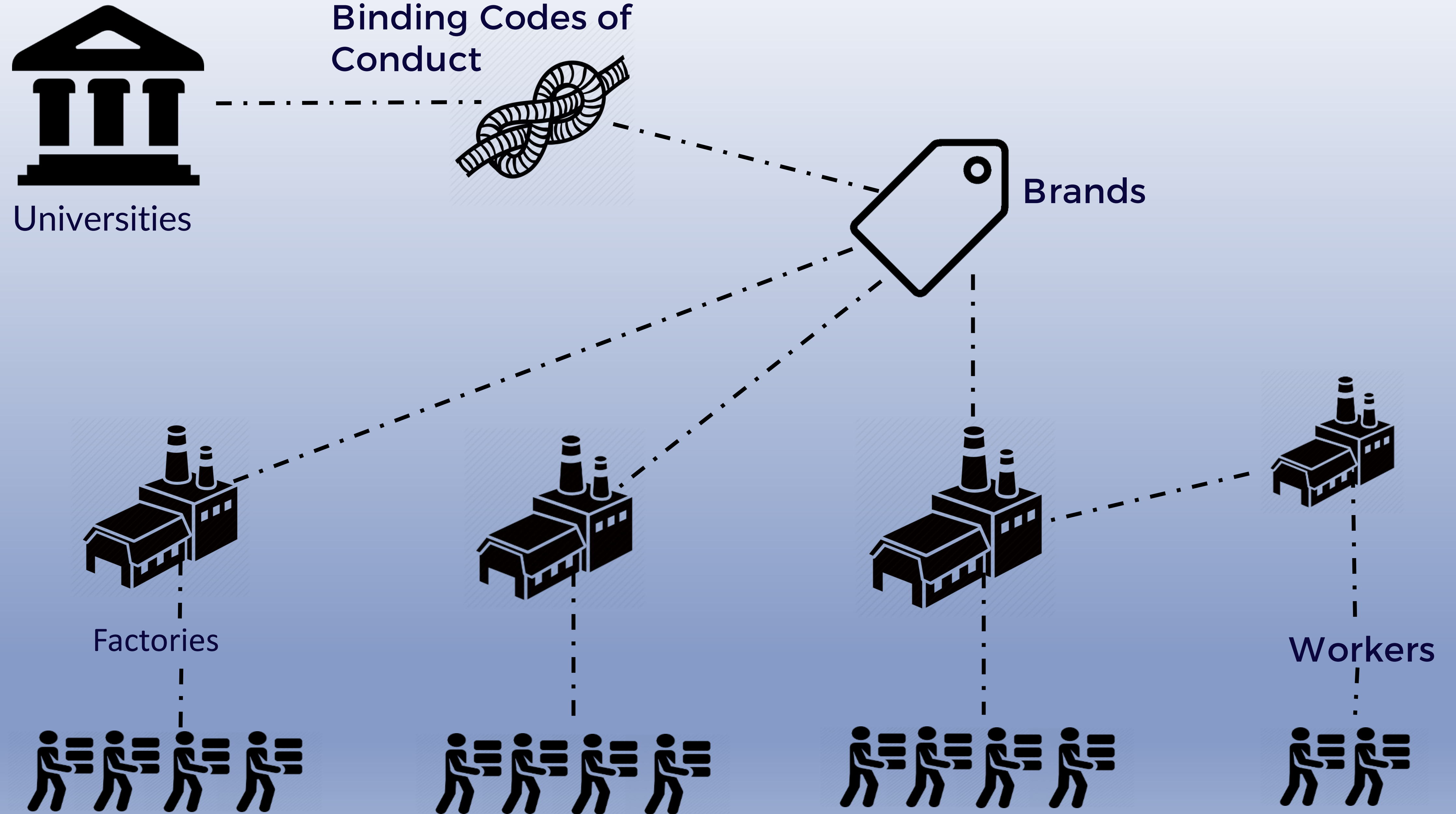
"Sometimes you find people crying in the corners because they were treated so badly," said Mr. Reyes.

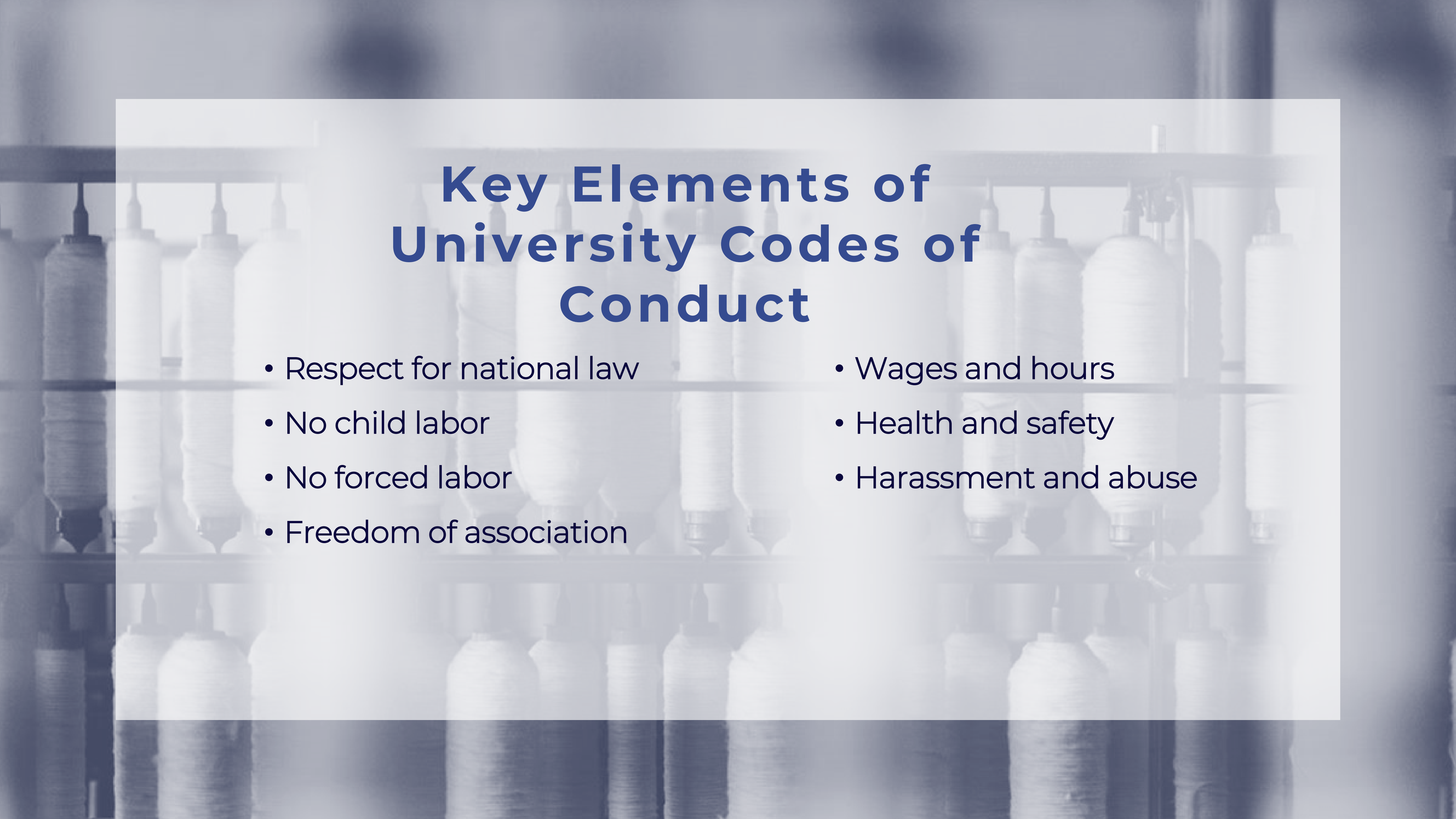
He and Ms. Rodríguez said workers are forced to work overtime, which is illegal in the Dominican Republic. And while most of the workers need the additional money, the forced overtime

From Santo Domingo to Harvard.

serves as a roadblock to those who want to go to college at night. This is a point they plan to stress in their meetings on college campuses here.

The union's report said BJ&B fires workers who are found to be involved in labor-organizing activities, and has attempted to fire pregnant workers. Ms. Rodríguez complained that women are forced to take pregnancy tests before being hired, a policy she described as an affront.





Key Elements of University Codes of Conduct

- Respect for national law
- No child labor
- No forced labor
- Freedom of association
- Wages and hours
- Health and safety
- Harassment and abuse

Verification and Enforcement



WORKER RIGHTS
CONSORTIUM

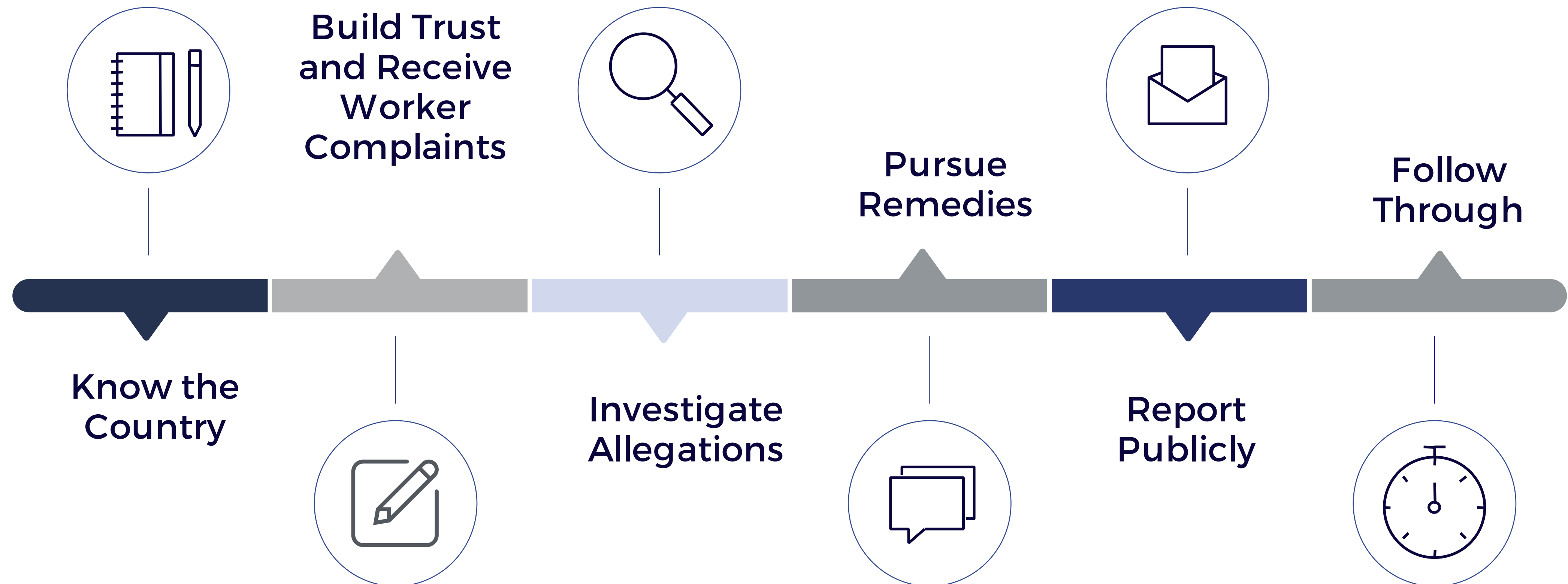


WORKER RIGHTS
CONSORTIUM

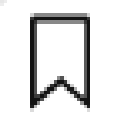


WORKER RIGHTS
CONSORTIUM

How We Work



Latin Sweatshops Pressed by U.S. Campus Power

[Share full article](#)

By David Gonzalez

April 4, 2003

When workers first tried unionizing the BJ&B hat factory that is the town's biggest employer, the streets were abuzz with rumors that the factory would rather close down than negotiate.

Two years later, not only is the factory still around, but there also is a union, and it recently negotiated a labor contract that provides raises, scholarships and other benefits that are unheard of among



Powerful Partnerships



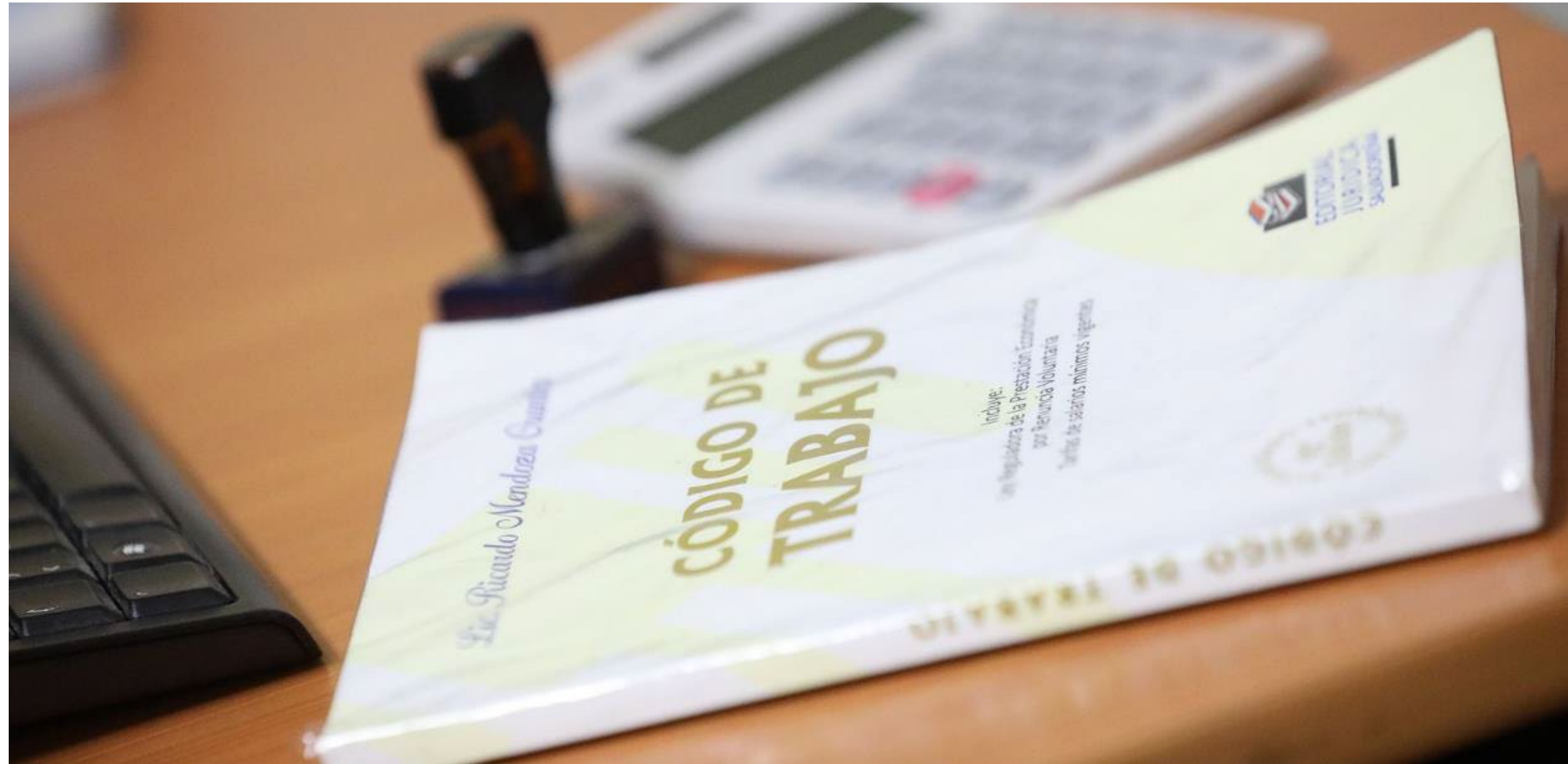
WRC Investigation at Style Avenue: Findings

OUTER
S T U F F Ltd

Findings

Style Avenue (El Salvador)

- Operations ceased
February 2023
- Closure announced in
May 2023
- Style Avenue did not pay
wages or severance



Legally required payments

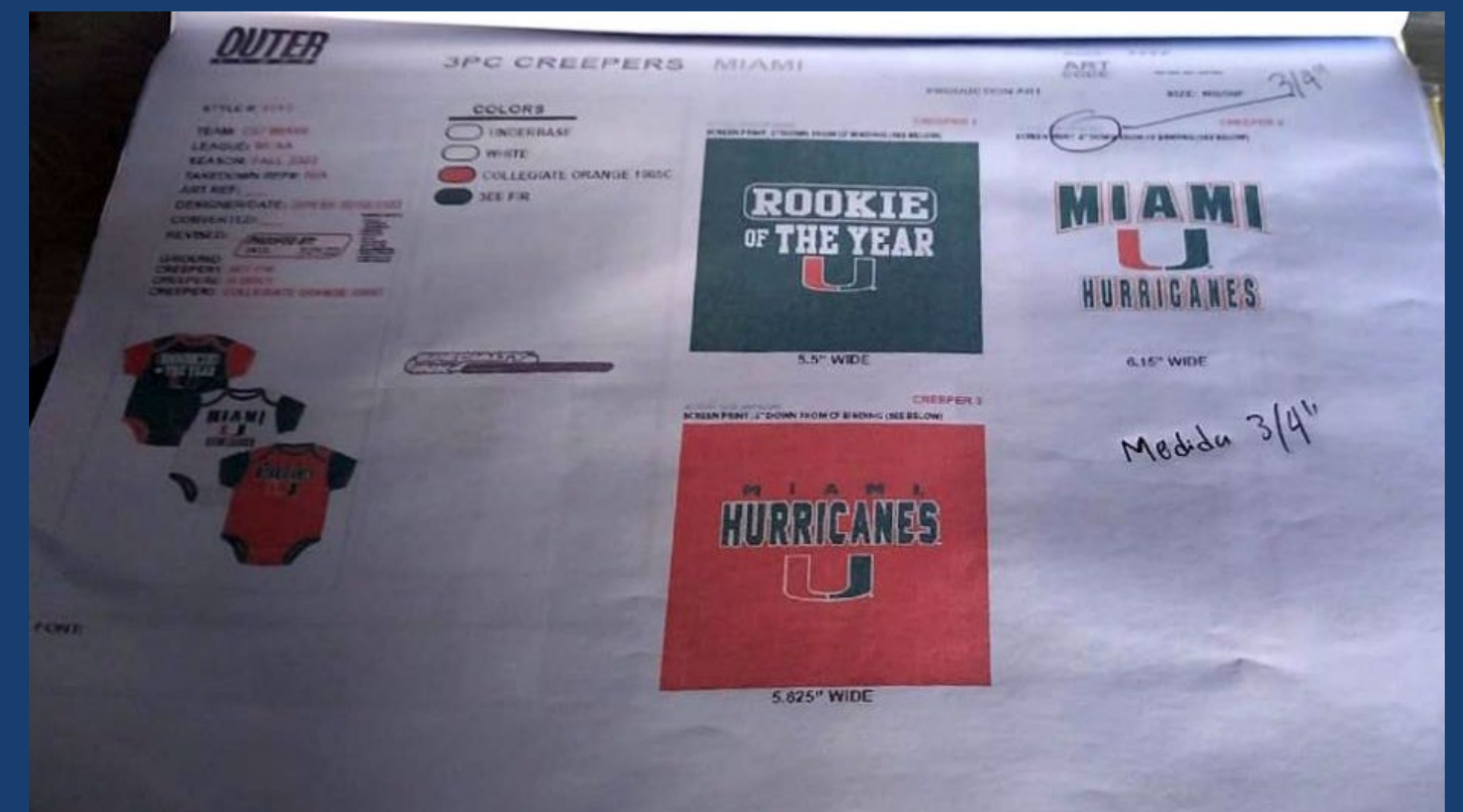
- Unpaid wages
- Unpaid vacation and bonuses
- Severance

Total amount owed to Style Avenue
workers = US\$1.8 million





WALT DISNEY



Impact of Wage Theft on Style Avenue Workers

Workers could not afford:

- Basic food items
- Rent and utility bills
- Medical expenses
- Children's school fees, supplies

Required remediation:

Ensure payment of wages, severance, and other benefits to Style Avenue's 244 former employees

WORKER RIGHTS CONSORTIUM FACTORY ASSESSMENT

Severance and Wage Theft from Workers at Style Avenue
(El Salvador Supplier of Licensed Apparel to Outerstuff)
Findings, Recommendations and Licensee Response



Workers gather outside Style Avenue in May 2023 after learning the Outerstuff supplier factory had permanently closed, while owing workers approximately \$1.8 million.

December 12, 2023



WORKER RIGHTS
CONSORTIUM

1990 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 387-4884 | www.workersrights.org

Outerstuff's Initial Response

- May 2023: "Outerstuff ... for over 10 years ... was basically 100% of the [factory's] capacity."
- July 2023: "Outerstuff LLC will not be contributing any additional funds to Style Avenue workers."
- November 2023: "Outerstuff has not violated any provision of the CLC Code of Conduct [and] ... took all necessary steps to ensure that the Style Avenue workers were paid...."

Outerstuff's Obligation to Correct Wage and Severance Theft

- Outerstuff disclosed factory as collegiate supplier, was buyer up to closure
- University codes require workers receive legally owed wages and severance
- Codes make licensees responsible for ensuring remedy for nonpayment
- No prospect of factory owner paying workers
- Outerstuff had ability to make workers whole
- Conclusion: Outerstuff had duty to pay workers

International Media Coverage of Reporting

Garment workers have lost out on \$4bn of severance pay, says rights group

The employees, who made clothes for western clothing brands, were legally entitled to the money after losing their jobs



📷 Workers at Style Avenue factory in El Salvador which closed in May 2023, laying off about 250 workers. Photograph: Courtesy of Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social de El Salvador

More than £4bn in wages has been withheld from millions of garment workers making clothes for western clothing brands over the past 15 years, according to new estimates on severance “wage theft” in the global fashion industry.

Outreach to Non-collegiate Outerstuff Licensors



The
WALT DISNEY
Company

Style Avenue / Outerstuff Remediation of University Code Violations

February 2024

Outerstuff signs MOU with WRC committing to provide workers:

- \$1.2 million by April 2024
(currently in WRC escrow account)
- \$600,000 *plus* interest,
by January 2025
- Cost of distribution; assistance
opening bank accounts



Paid in Full:

**How the WRC's
Work Has
Transformed the
Apparel Industry's
Response to
Severance Theft**

A group of garment workers, mostly women wearing colorful headscarves, are sitting on a paved street. In the background, there are several large trucks and a city skyline with multi-story buildings. The image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

\$5 billion in severance payments
not paid to millions of garment
workers in past 15 years

Severance Theft Has a Devastating Impact on Workers and Families

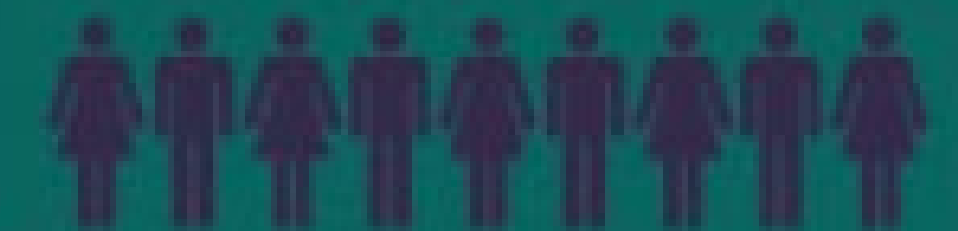
- Hard-earned and legally owed
- Stolen when workers need it most
- Equivalent to life savings or pension
- No other safety net for families



Workers earn 45% less than what they need to survive



A living wage
is a human
right, for all
people, all
over the world



The Role of Brands



Codes of conduct



Obligation to comply
with law



Prices paid to suppliers
are insufficient



Unpaid Severance: A Wage Theft Pandemic for Garment Workers



**Half a Billion in Severance:
Laid-Off Garment Workers Still
Waiting on Wages**

Forbes

**Garment Workers Were 'Robbed' Of
Millions In Benefits. Which Brands
Are Stepping In?**

Full Payment of Severance in Factory Closures: A University-Led Precedent

UW NEWS

UNCATEGORIZED

April 2, 2009

Guatemalan workers get severance pay, thanks to UW student efforts

[Bob Roseth](#)

News and Information



UW students tour a Guatemalan factory as part of a task force led by Associate Professor of International Studies Angelina Godoy. The students learned that employees of a recently closed plant had not received their severance pay. A discovery by a UW student task force about the treatment of workers being laid off from a Guatemalan apparel factory in February 2008 has finally led to legally due severance payments for most of those workers.

The New York Times

Pressured, Nike to Help Workers in Honduras

 Give this article    34

By **Steven Greenhouse**

July 26, 2010

Facing pressure from universities and student groups, the apparel maker Nike announced on Monday that it would pay \$1.54 million to help 1,800 workers in Honduras who lost their jobs when two subcontractors closed their factories.

Nike agreed to the payment after several universities and a nationwide group, United Students Against Sweatshops, pressed it to pay some \$2 million in severance that the two subcontractors had failed to pay.

The University of Wisconsin, Madison terminated its licensing agreement with Nike over the Honduran dispute, and Cornell warned that it would do the same unless Nike resolved the matter



Adidas settles with Indonesian workers over PT Kizone

Updated: Apr. 24, 2013, 3:31 p.m. |

By Allan Brettman |
Adidas announced an agreement Wednesday that may put to rest an ongoing dispute with a group of Indonesian factory workers who lost pay when the factory owner closed the plant and fled the country.

Adidas said it will contribute additional aid to workers in Indonesia displaced by an unethical apparel factory closure.

Workers' rights groups had been pressuring Adidas to pay what they called \$1.8 million in unpaid severance.

Premium Apparel (Haiti)

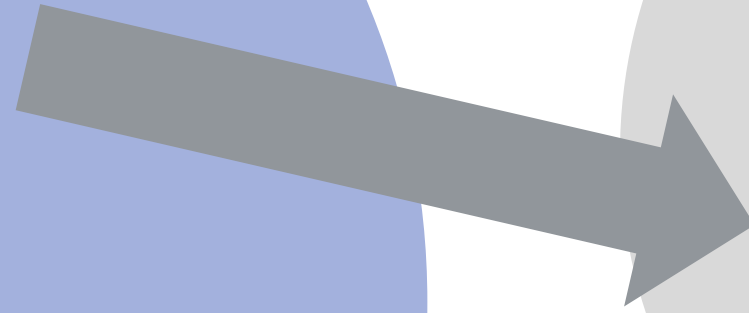
- Supplier to Gildan, in part for collegiate licensee New Agenda
- Gildan notified Premium in June 2023 that it would discontinue sourcing; Premium's owner was sanctioned by the Canadian government
- Factory closed in November 2023; Premium informed Gildan that it would not pay the workers' severance
- Given factory's refusal to pay, Gildan committed \$700,000 to 900 factory employees; payments occurred in January 2024

Over \$80 million secured for workers in legally mandated severance

Year	Licensee	Factory, Country	Amount
2010	Nike	Hugger/Vision Tex, Honduras	\$1,540,000
2013	Adidas	Kizone, Indonesia	\$2,592,071
2017	Tailgate	Rio Garment, Honduras	\$1,345,000
2019	Fanatics	Direct Ship America, Honduras	\$468,000
2020	Nike	PT Kahoindah, Indonesia	\$4,500,000
2021	New Era	Elim, Guatemala	\$896,000
2022	Cutter & Buck	KGG, Ethiopia	\$91,219
2024	Outerstuff	Style Avenue, Haiti	\$1,800,000

\$80
million

secured for
workers in legally
mandated
severance



\$30
million

Since 2022
alone

\$147
million

Recovered in
total



Distribution of funds to workers

**Today, Ensuring Full Payment
of Severance Is a Recognized
Standard of Good Practice**

Non-collegiate severance theft remediation

PVH
G-III Aseel
Jordan
\$2.7
million

PVH
Vald'or
Haiti
\$1
million

Victoria's Secret
Brilliant Alliance
Thailand
\$8.3
million

\$522,000
Bestseller
Solamoda
Myanmar

How we do it

Violations framework pinned onto local **labor laws**

Credibility of findings

Relationship with brands – **shared expectation** of the WRC's **objective** of remediation

In many cases licensee doesn't have to pay,
manufacturer pays

**Only close case upon full remediation of all
violations**



A redefined standard of remediation

Q&A

Break

Year in Review

2023-2024

WRC STAFF BY THE NUMBERS



11

HEADQUARTERS
STAFF



16

FIELD
STAFF



27

LANGUAGES SPOKEN



Non-university Partnerships



Council on Ethics for the
Norwegian Government
Pension Fund



U.S. Department of Labor



City of Los Angeles



City and County
of San Francisco

Q&A

Investigations and Remediation at Collegiate Factories 2023 – 2024

Global Scope

15 Countries

El Salvador
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Mexico

Ethiopia

Bangladesh
India
Pakistan

Cambodia
China
Myanmar
Indonesia
Thailand
Vietnam

**35 investigations
and remediation
efforts at collegiate
factories**

22 licensees

37 additional buyers



The WRC investigated worker complaints at these licensees' factories

SPIRIT CLOTHING CO.

ALPHABRODER

CAMP DAVID

COLUMBIA

CUTTER & BUCK

FANATICS

47 BRAND

GEAR FOR SPORTS

GORILLA MARKETING

CHARLES RIVER APPAREL

ISAAC MORRIS

LAKESHIRTS

LULULEMON

MV SPORT

LO + JO BANDS

UNDER ARMOUR

NEW AGENDA

NEW BALANCE

NIKE

OUTERSTUFF

ONWARD CAPITAL

VERA BRADLEY

Hong Seng Knitting

- Located in Thailand
- Supplies collegiate apparel to Nike
- Workforce at time of violation: 3,360 production workers
- Employs Thai and Burmese workers



Hong Seng: Summary

- Factory lost orders during pandemic; wanted to reduce workforce
- In Thailand, workers temporarily laid off must be paid 75% of basic wage
- Hong Seng did not want to pay wages or pay severance
- So...Hong Seng pressured workers to sign documents “volunteering” to take unpaid leave
- Workers lost an estimated \$500,000 in wages, with legally mandated interest is now \$800,000
- Nike says workers genuinely consented; required backpay only for a few workers who filed legal complaints

Nike's unanswered questions

- Why would 99% of workers voluntarily give up wages?
- If the process was truly voluntary, why was there any conflict at all?

Nike urged to backpay garment workers ahead of annual meeting

By **Katherine Masters**

September 11, 2023 3:42 PM EDT · Updated 8 months ago



FINANCIAL TIMES

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Investors pressure Nike on wages allegedly owed to factory workers

Oliver Telling and **Kenza Bryan** SEPTEMBER 11 2023

Nike investors dial up pressure on worker rights

70 of Nike's major institutional investors with \$8 trillion in assets are demanding that the Hong Seng workers receive what they are owed



Sun Shui Shing (Cambodia)

- Supplier of collegiate-licensed goods to Vera Bradley
- On March 29, 2023, workers established and elected officers for a union
- WRC's investigation found that factory management:
 - Threatened and carried out retaliatory suspensions and firings of five worker leaders and activists
 - Made threats of physical and sexual assault against these workers
 - Issued threats of retaliatory firing against nine other workers

***“You are all women!
Aren’t you afraid of getting beaten or raped?”***

-Sun Shui Shing Factory HR Manager

Sun Shui Shing(Cambodia) Remediation

- The WRC shared findings with factory management and Vera Bradley
- The WRC then reached out to Puma and PVH
- After engagement by PVH with factory management, Sun Shui Shing took remedial action
- The five worker union leaders were reinstated in October 2023

- Supplier of collegiate licensed apparel to Lululemon
- In April 2023, workers decided to establish a union
- Factory management retaliated by
 - Terminating the worker union president
 - Transferring worker union secretary to different job assignments and shortening her work contract
 - Shortening the work contract of the union vice president

Quantum Apparel (Cambodia)



Quantum Apparel (Cambodia) Remediation

- The WRC sent our findings to the parent company of Quantum Apparel and Lululemon
- After engagement by the WRC and Lululemon, Quantum Apparel:
 - Reinstated the worker union leader with full back pay equaling three months' wages
 - Issued regular long-term employment contracts to the three worker union leaders
 - Refrained from further discrimination against workers who join the union
- As a result of the remediation, the environment in the factory for the exercise of association improved

NIAGARA TEXTILES (BANGLADESH)



- Work-related truck and bus accidents killed 1 worker, left dozens of others injured
- WRC Findings:
 - Inadequate compensation for worker's death
 - Abuse of severely injured workers:
 - Denied payment of medical bills
 - Forced to resign, denied legally owed severance
 - Threatened with violence for raising complaint



NIAGARA TEXTILES (BANGLADESH)

- Corrective Actions Achieved:
 - Tripled compensation for family of killed worker
 - Severely injured workers received:
 - Reimbursement of medical bills
 - Legally owed severance
 - Back wages
 - Reinstatement offers
 - Safety improvements at factory and on company-supplied buses



NIAGARA TEXTILES (BANGLADESH)

“When we were finally paid, it was like my world went from dark to light. I started to cry, because I was overwhelmed with relief.

I’ve been able to pay off my debts, send my son back to school, and even rent some land to raise vegetables and chickens so I can support myself.”

Parul Begum

Niagara worker severely injured in bus crash

Suditi Industries

- Mumbai, India
- Sumerra audit for CLC:
 - Found illegally subcontracted workers, noted some safety hazards
 - But not able to interview subcontract workers
- WRC investigation:
 - Interviewed illegal subcontract workers
 - Found subminimum wages
 - Flagged factory as a deadly firetrap
- Factory response:
 - Denied illegally subcontracted workers even existed
 - Produced fake fire safety 'certifications'

campdavid.



Suditi Industries

- Mumbai, India
- WRC follow-up with factory and licensee:
 - Proved illegal subcontracting by videotaping workers entering and exiting factory
 - Exposed safety certificates as fakes, insisted on independent inspection by safety engineers
- Corrective action:
 - Production ended in firetrap facility
 - Licensee ceased sourcing from Suditi
 - Subcontracted workers compensated for years of underpayment

Suditi Industries

campdavid.

*"Getting the wages I was owed
has changed my life.*

*It gives me faith that there are
still good people on earth who
work relentlessly for others'
benefit."*

Suditi subcontract worker

The Rising Challenge of Extreme Heat

“They’re not built for humans.”



Cambodian Factory Snapshot

Nour (sewing worker):

“I am completely soaked in sweat.... The heat makes me exhausted.”

“They curse or insult us. They blame us.”

Factory Response:

The factory maintains “a comfortable indoor temperature with cooling and ventilation systems”

Ry (sewing worker):

“Anything involving money is always a problem. The factory managers don’t care about how heat impacts us, only that we speed up and work faster.”

Text: The Fuller Project.

A Clear Problem, but Lack of Clear Standards

- Lack of legal standard for temperature in many countries
- Occupational Health and Safety General Duty
 - Ex: “Licensees shall provide a safe and healthy working environment to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with, or occurring in the course of work or as a result of the operation of Licensee facilities.” (WRC model code)



Hansae Vietnam



WRC Investigation (2016)

- Supplied collegiate apparel to Nike
- Also supplied Gap, H&M, L Brands (owner of Victoria Secret), Hanes, Inditex (owner of Zara), JCPenney, Macy's, Children's Place, Target, and Walmart
- 8,500 workers, 12 buildings
- Some ventilation and evaporative cooling systems
- Worker testimony: temperatures sometimes above 98°F
- WRC measured temps up to 95°F (during relatively cool weather)



Impact on Workers

“Fainting happens every day, maybe one or two people. They are carried to the clinic to rest half an hour, and then they [are told to] return to work.”

Remediation

- Additional temperature management systems installed
- Improved health clinic data tracking and treatment procedures

Lunch

Saving Lives in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Beyond:

The Future of the International Safety Accord

Ali Enterprises
262 Dead

Tazreen Fashions
113 Dead

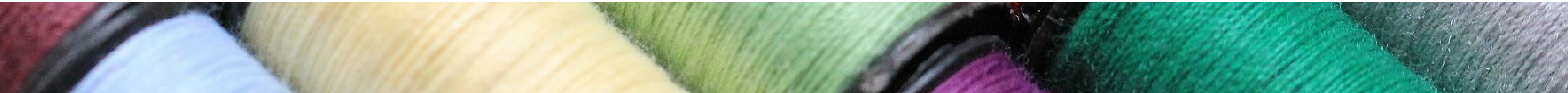
Rana Plaza
1,137 Dead

The Failure of Voluntary, Industry-Led Monitoring

Virtually every major mass fatality disaster in the region happened in a factory that had been repeatedly inspected by brand auditors



End Mass Fatality Disasters

- WRC and others advocated for fundamental changes in brands' safety practices from 2006
 - We recognized that an industry-wide program was the only means to make collegiate factories safe
 - In Dec. 2010, WRC developed first proposal for binding safety agreement; modeled on university codes
 - By 2012, only two brands had signed...
- 

BANGLADESH ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY



42 Collegiate
Factories,
Employing 30,000+
Workers

More than 2,500
Hazards Identified,
including a factory at
imminent risk of
collapse

Result: 95% of
hazards eliminated;
vastly safer
collegiate factories
in Bangladesh

Safety Hazards in Pakistan

Ali Enterprises fire: 262 dead

Worst mass fatality fire in history



International **ACCORD**



for Health and Safety in the
Textile and Garment Industry



Key Elements of Pakistan Accord

- Brands must:
 - require suppliers to implement all renovations
 - ensure financially feasible
 - cease business with any factory that fails to comply
- Applies to complaint mechanism
- Full transparency of progress
- Legal enforceability of brand commitments

Pakistan Accord: Coverage



- 🎯 **Approx. 500 factories**
- 🎯 **Approx. 55% in Sindh, 45% in Punjab**
- 🎯 **>500.000 workers**

CMT Only	327
Fabric mill only	27
CMT & fabric	98
Total	509

Fabric accessories	11
Home textile	106
RMG	387
Total	509

Status of Operations in Pakistan: Programs

- 🕒 Inspections started October 2023
- 🕒 Over 100 inspections to date at 34 factories:
 - 🕒 125 factories by end of July 2024
 - 🕒 All covered factories by January 2025
- 🕒 Complaints System: July 2024



Safety Issues From Inspections



Fire safety

Getting out safely

- ⊙ No automatic alarm systems
- ⊙ No viable means of escape



Electrical safety

Electrocution + ignition

- ⊙ Hot spots
- ⊙ Lack of adequate earthing systems



Structural safety

critical elements can fail without warning

- ⊙ Unreliable documentation
- ⊙ Inadequate concrete strength

Collegiate Factories

10% of Collegiate Factories Inspected

All in Karachi

More than 5,000 Workers

Hazards Identified

- Inadequate exit systems
- Open stairwells
- Non-functioning alarm systems
- Various electrical risks

Inspections & Remediation

Inspections

- International & Pakistan Accord engineers
- Inspections in Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad
- Boilers start December 2024

Reporting and Remediation

- Renovation/repair mandates and deadlines circulated
- Renovations/repairs begun
- Many immediate items completed

**Follow-up inspection & remediation monitoring
start in August 2024**

Expansion

Agreement on automatic triggers

Target countries

- India
- Morocco
- Sri Lanka

Target date: Spring of 2025

**INTERNATIONAL ACCORD
FRAMEWORK SIGNED
BY ALL ACCORD BRANDS**

- **1 Nov 2023 – 31 Dec 2026**
Auto-renewal
- **1 Jan 2027 – 31 Dec 2029**



**Pakistan
Accord**

- **1 Jan 2023 – 31 Dec 2025**
- Optional CSSP Addendum

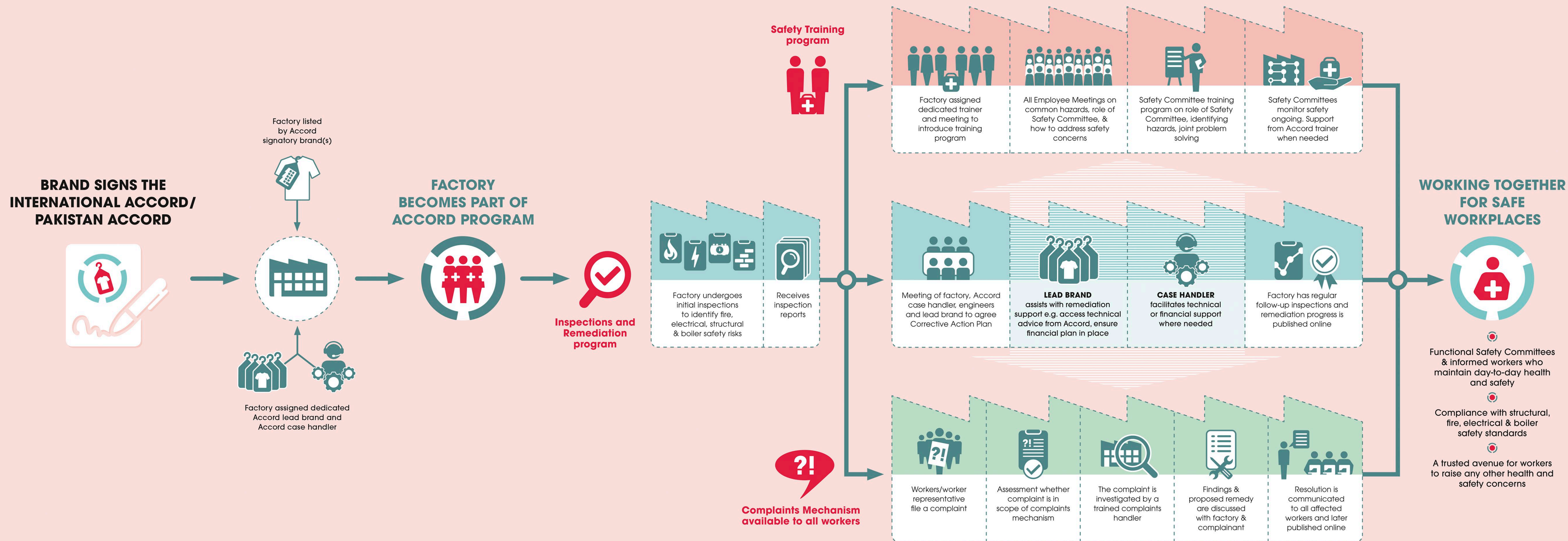
**Bangladesh
Safety
Agreement**

- **1 Nov 2023 – 31 Dec 2026**
- Optional CSSP Addendum

**Future
CSSPs**

- **Country selection based on feasibility studies**
- Timing based on expansion criteria





CLC Licensee Contract Amendments



- One small institution (not a WRC affiliate) opted out of Accord clause inclusion in license agreements, all others accepted
- All licensees have had new Accord requirement clauses added to renewed contracts
- All licensees will have renewed contracts including this language by June 30, 2024
- Any licensee producing collegiate licensed apparel in Pakistan is required to become a signatory of the Pakistan Accord
- Any licensee producing collegiate licensed apparel in Bangladesh is required to become a signatory of the International Accord

PAKISTAN ACCORD SIGNATORIES

- 120 international brand signatories
- 47 licensees sourcing in Pakistan
- Licensees that have signed:
 1. Colosseum Athletics
 2. L2 Brands (inc. Ouray Sportswear)
 3. Vantage Apparel
 4. C.I Sport
 5. T-Shirt International
 6. Uscape Apparel
 7. 47 Brand
 8. TRT Classics (Tobacco Rd Tees)
 9. Fanatics (Nike, Top of the World, Mitchell & Ness)
 10. Perrin (New Agenda)
 11. Campus Ink
 12. MV Sport (David Peyser Sportswear)
 13. Lakeshirts (Zephyr Graf-X)
 14. Eternal Fortune Fashion
 15. Image One (Luttrell Investments)
 16. Little King (Keyser Little King)
 17. Adidas

Licensees in contact with Accord

1. 978 Jerseys
2. Artisans Inc
3. Little Earth Productions
4. Maryland Screenprinters Inc.
5. Midwest College Marketing Group (Scribe Opco)

LICENSEES YET TO SIGN PAKISTAN ACCORD

Licensees newly sourcing in country

1. Camp David
2. Donecia's Crafts
3. Lo + Jo
4. Recess Apparel
5. Screentech

Licensees yet to sign

1. Assist 2 Score
2. Bend Active
3. College Concepts
(Concepts Sports)
4. Field Grade Supply Company
5. Five Star Apparel

6. Gainz Sportsgear
7. Gold Country (Signature Concepts)
8. Gorilla Marketing
9. Gridiron Group
10. JimiHack
11. Landway International
12. Novus Clothing Company
13. Paladin Sports
14. Pel Industries
15. Powell Lacrosse
16. Pro-Ad Sports
17. Rebirth Sports
18. Royce Apparel
19. Twin Vision Activewear

BANGLADESH ACCORD SIGNATORIES

- 177 brand signatories
- 20 licensees sourcing
- Signatories:
 1. Augusta Sportswear
 2. Colosseum Athletics
 3. L2 Brands (Ouray)
 4. Uscape Apparel
 5. Cutter & Buck /New Wave
 6. Fanatics
 7. Hanesbrands / GFSI
 8. Perrin / New Agenda
 9. Lakeshirts

LICENSEES YET TO SIGN BANGLADESH ACCORD

Licensees very newly sourcing in Bangladesh

1. Ahead LLC
2. Heard Design LLC
3. Isaac Morris
4. Lands' End Inc.
5. Made To Order Inc.
6. Paramount Apparel International
7. Pro-Ad Sports

Licensees in contact with Accord

1. Outerstuff (previously signed Accord)
2. Image One (has signed IA and Pakistan)

Licensee yet to sign

1. Gorilla Marketing – for both Bangladesh and Pakistan

Q&A

Open Discussion

Break

When There's No One Else to Call:

Addressing Rights Violations Where Worker Voices Are Silenced



WRC's work in Haiti amidst collapse of rule of law

Haiti has long
been plagued by
poverty, natural
disasters, political
instability, and
gang violence.

- Four million experiencing food insecurity
- 1,500 killed
- 50,000 displaced

10

Factories sourcing
university licensed
apparel



6

cases
successfully
resolved

Factories closed
without paying
severance

Sexual
harassment
and dismissal

Blacklisting of
workers

Retaliatory mass
firing

Factories closed without paying severance

- Premium Apparel
- Vald'or
- Horizon Manufacturing

\$2.1 million
recovered for

2,500
workers

**Sexual
harassment and
dismissal**

Mazava Hispaniola

**Licensee:
Gorilla Marketing
(SanMar)**

Retaliatory
mass firing

**Centri Group
Supplier to Gildan**

Blacklisting of workers

Palm Apparel

Buyer: Gildan

Licensees: New Agenda
and MV Sport

Crackdown and criminalization of workers in Bangladesh

Bangladesh Context

- \$47 billion industry accounts for 83% of export earnings, nearly 10% GDP
- US is largest export market with steadily increasing volume
- 20 licensees sourcing from 43 factories
- 4 million garment workers, mostly women
- Worker rights severely constrained, particularly freedom of association, worsening under authoritarian government

Cost of Living Crisis: Impacts on Workers

Highest inflation in 11 years

- Cost of food has risen beyond the ability of workers to afford basic items like rice, potatoes, eggs, or lentils.
- **From 2022**, workers had begun protesting, demanding a wage board be formed, citing an inability to survive on wages

Research showed

- 80% of workers run out of money before next paycheck, forced to take high interest loans
- None earned enough to feed their families adequately
- 90% unable to afford children's school

Wage Setting Process

- Minimum wage revised every 5 years, last wage of \$73 per month set in 2018 (increase to 8,000 Bangladesh taka “BDT” at the time was \$96)
- Tripartite wage board issues recommendations to the PM
- Lack of genuine labor representation and transparency
- Minimum wage setting often accompanied by brutal, systematic repression of workers
- In 2023, unions united in a call of US\$215 (BDT 23,000–25,000)
- Coincided with pre-election process
- Board formed in April 2023. May, August & October meetings: no proposals submitted by members amid increasing frustration among workers
- Late October: factory owners proposed \$95, sparking mass protests across country

Systematic Punishment & Retaliation against Workers

1. Violence and killing of workers

- Military and riot police brought from around country and stationed in factory areas
- Four workers died: Rasel Hawlader 26, Imran Hossain, 32, Anjuara Begum, 23, and Jalal Uddin, 42
- Hundreds injured

Stoking Fear among Workers

2. Punitive use of mass criminal cases against workers

- BGMEA directed factories to file criminal cases against both named and unnamed workers
- At least 200 workers jailed including 4 union leaders
- 43 criminal cases filed, leaving 20,000 workers at risk of arrest

Wage Outcome

- Wage set at US\$113 (BDT 12,500), a 14% increase once adjusted for inflation
- History shows how quickly this small gain will be reversed; 2018 minimum wage increase represented a similar, 13% increase in real terms
- By the end of 2020, real wages had *declined* to their 2013 wage level and by 2023 workers were making 11% *less* than a decade earlier
- If inflation continues, value of increase eroded by 2026, workers will make less than they do currently

Bangladesh garment workers fighting for pay face brutal violence and threats

Workers describe hands and arms being targeted in 'merciless' beatings as protests over low wages turn increasingly violent in Dhaka



Garment workers clash with police in Dhaka on 2 November during protests over low wages in Bangladesh. Photograph: Kazi Salahuddin Razu/NurPhoto/Shutterstock

When Masuma Akhtar arrived at the garment factory where she works on the outskirts of Dhaka on 31 October, she was expecting a normal shift. Instead, she was met with brute violence. “The moment I walked through the factory gates, a group of armed men began beating me with wooden sticks,” says Akhtar. “I fell down on to the ground. Even then they wouldn’t stop beating me.”

WRC Response



Advocacy that fits.

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March 18, 2024

Sheikh Hasina, Honorable Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Subject: End Detention & Threats of Detention of Workers Protesting Minimum Wage in Bangladesh

Dear Honorable Prime Minister,

On behalf of the members of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I restate AAFA's repeated calls to end the ongoing detention, and the continued threat of detention, of thousands of workers related to the protests over the minimum wage in Fall 2023. As we have stated previously, I also urge the Bangladesh government to investigate, and hold accountable, those responsible for the violence that led to the deaths and injuries of workers during the protests.

AAFA Urges BGMEA and Bangladesh Government to Drop Criminal Cases



Advocacy that fits.

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March 18, 2024

Faruque Hassan, President
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA)

Subject: End Detention & Threats of Detention of Workers Protesting Minimum Wage in Bangladesh

Dear Faruque,

On behalf of the members of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I am writing to request BGMEA's support of AAFA's repeated calls to end the ongoing detention, and the continued threat of detention, of thousands of workers related to the protests over the minimum wage in Fall 2023. As we have stated previously, I also urge BGMEA to request that the Bangladesh government to investigate, and hold accountable, those responsible for the violence that led to the deaths and injuries of workers during the protests.

Progress

1. 8 of the 17 criminal cases filed by factories have withdrawal applications
2. Most workers and unionists freed from jail
3. Brand engagement is consistent and systematic
4. Pace of withdrawals faster than last time
 - built on previous strategy

One criminal case linked to collegiate supply chain

- Hanes and Fanatics buying collegiate apparel from a sister factory (owned by same parent company)
- 4000 – 5000 unnamed workers listed
- 14 arrests
- Factory continuing to make bogus claims to brands and licensees

Q&A

Thank You!