

Geneva, 30 August 2016

Md. Shahadat Hossain  
Managing Director  
**Habib Fashions Ltd.**  
E-13, Lutfon Tower (11th Floor), Middle Badda  
Dhaka-1212  
Bangladesh

Sent by email to [md@fortisgermany.com](mailto:md@fortisgermany.com); [shahin@kadesignbd.com](mailto:shahin@kadesignbd.com)

## IndustriALL Global Union Calls on Habib Fashions in Bangladesh to reopen factory and respect fundamental workers' rights

Dear Shahadat Hossain,

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers throughout the manufacturing chain, including textile and garments sectors, in 140 countries worldwide, including Bangladesh, to call on Habib Fashions to reopen its factory, guarantee decent working conditions for its workforce, including regular work and full wages, and enter into meaningful industrial relations with the trade union Sommolito Garment Sramik Federation (SGSF). Please note that the SGSF is affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union.

We have been informed by Sommolito Garment Sramik Federation (SGSF) that Habib Fashions, which was working as a sub-contractor to many factories producing for international brands, including FILA, has closed its factory located at E-13, Lutfon Tower, Middle Badda, Dhaka – 1212 on false grounds of non-availability of orders. The reality is that the factory has orders beyond its capacity and workers were forced to work from 6 am till 10 pm during Ramadan to fulfil orders.

Our affiliate alleges that the factory has been closed solely in order to bust the union that was being organised by the SGSF. On 30 June 2016, an application for registering the union was made by to the Joint Director of Labour. Due process of law was being followed, and the JDL had written to SGSF raising certain objections. The SGSF was in the process of addressing the objections when the factory management met the leaders of the federation on 19 July 2016 and asked that the application for union registration be withdrawn. The federation leaders did not agree to do so. The factory management started to shift the machinery on the night of 27 July 2016 and declared a “temporary closure” on 29 July 2016 to take effect as of August 2016. There is no mention in the letter written by Habib Fashions to the JDL as to the period of the “temporary closure.”

These factors make it clear that the factory has been closed only to get rid of the union and ensure that the workers will not form any union even in future. There are still plenty of orders from several factories.

This is a blatantly illegal action on your part. S.186 of the Bangladesh Labour Act makes it clear that “no employer shall, while an application for registration of a trade union formed in his establishment is pending, alter the terms and conditions of service of any officer of that union, without prior permission of the Director of Labour, to the disadvantage of such officer.” Consequently, your action is in direct contravention of S.186.

Therefore, IndustriALL Global Union calls upon Habib Fashions to immediately reopen the factory and provide the workers with regular work and wages. Furthermore, we call on Habib Fashions to establish sound and fair industrial relations, including negotiations with the Sommolito Garment Sramik Federation (SGSF), in full accordance with national labour law, and fundamental core labour standards such as the International Labour Organizations' (ILO) Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, and ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line across the middle, and a diagonal line on the right that slopes downwards.

Jyrki Raina  
General Secretary  
IndustriALL Global Union