



**INDUSTRIALL GLOBAL UNION STATEMENT  
ON  
ILO ROADMAP IN BANGLADESH**

In 2019, several workers' organizations made a complaint under Article 26 on the non-observance of Conventions 81, 87 and 98 by the government of Bangladesh (GoB) to the International Labour Conference. Following the complaint, the ILO Governing Body (GB) requested the GoB to develop, in consultation with the social partners and with support from the ILO Office, a time-bound roadmap of actions with concrete outcomes to address the issues outlined in the complaint.

The GoB submitted a roadmap in May 2021 on four priority areas:

1. Labour law reform
2. Trade union registration
3. Labour inspection and enforcement
4. Addressing acts of anti-union discrimination/unfair labour practices and violence against workers.

So far, the GoB has submitted three reports to the ILO GB highlighting the progress made regarding the roadmap. The latest progress report was submitted in September 2022 before the GB meeting, scheduled to begin on 30 October.

The report notes the adoption of the amended Bangladesh Labour Rules. IndustriALL affiliates in Bangladesh point out that the new rules have reduced maternity benefits. Pregnant workers will now receive a 6.5 per cent lower monetary compensation than they did previously. Amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act are yet to be finalized.

Regarding trade union registration, the GoB report mentions the completion of the digitization of the trade union registration process, the establishment of a pre-application service desk and the training of employers, workers and government officials on the process of union registration process. However, IndustriALL's affiliates report that the registration process doesn't work effectively. IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) members who took part in the training programme conducted by the Department of labour (DoL) say that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on trade union registration, developed with the assistance from ILO, was discussed but nothing concrete on the implementation of the same was brought up in the discussion. Often the pre-application service desks are not set up in the offices and even when they are, they are ineffective, with staff not being available. The factory union president and general secretary must be present when applying for union registration, even though it is not required by law or the rules.

Further, the online database of registered trade unions does not reflect the actual number of existing unions. Some unionized factories have shut down, but the registered union is included in the database. This implies that the figure of 1,174 unions in RMG sector is highly exaggerated. According to our affiliates, there are currently approximately 550 registered unions in the RGM sector.



Regarding the labour inspection and enforcement priority, the report discusses on the complaints' helpline number and an online database to track the complaints. Affiliates inform that the helpline number cannot be reached most of the times, and the online database of complaints is poorly maintained. It's not only difficult to track the complaint, but also to lodge it in the first place.

IndustriALL affiliates report that apart from having a component on violence, harassment, unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination in the workplace in the training programme mentioned above, the government hasn't taken any concrete steps to address the issue of anti-union discrimination and harassment and violence against workers.

IndustriALL affiliates in Bangladesh are demanding:

- proper payment of wages and over-time wages
- that the registration process is made easier
- amendment of BLA and BLR in line with ILO conventions
- establishment of more labour courts
- social protection, including employment injury, unemployment benefit, housing and food support
- establishment of hospital in industrial zones
- establishment of occupational health and safety and anti-harassment committees at factory level
- disbanding of industrial police as workers are unfairly targeted

IndustriALL Global Union calls on the government of Bangladesh:

- to make sincere efforts to implement the Roadmap in full consultation with trade unions, particularly IndustriALL affiliates, through genuine social dialogue
- to consider the demands made by our affiliates in the implementation of the roadmap
- to make sure that the concerns of RMG workers are reflected

**It is high time that the government of Bangladesh takes serious steps to implement the roadmap and work towards improving the situation of workers in the country.**