



[\(more on the Spectrum sweater factory disaster\)](#)



For immediate release

MAJOR EUROPEAN COMPANIES SOURCING AT COLLAPSED BANGLADESH FACTORY

Amsterdam, April 15, 2005

The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) has confirmed that a number of major European-headquartered garment companies produced their goods at the Bangladesh factory that collapsed early Monday April 11th. The death toll in this tragedy continues to rise, while the majority of workers remain trapped inside. To date only approximately 100 workers have reportedly emerged alive from the rubble. Reports on how many workers were in the factory at the time range from approximately 200 - 400.

More info:
[Bangladeshi Garment Workers Buried Alive](#)

The facility, Spectrum Sweater Ltd, located in Savar, an industrial town northwest of Dhaka, collapsed around 1 a.m. Monday, also damaging the adjacent Shariar Fabrics Ltd. The collapse is generally being attributed to faulty design and construction, though an investigation into the exact cause of the collapse of the nine-story factory, built on marshland, is ongoing. While it remains unclear if the factory had a licence from the factory inspections division of the Ministry of Labour to legally operate a night shift, the company was clearly in violation of Bangladesh labor law by allowing women to work in the factory at the time of the collapse. Local unions are calling for the immediate arrest and prosecution of the factory owners on the grounds of criminal negligence.

Dec 2000 [53 die in Garment Factory fire Bangladesh](#)

Aug 2001 , [24 Garment workers die in Bangladeshi fire alarm](#)

June 2004 , [50 Die in garment factory tragedy Bangladesh](#)

April 2005, [350 Bangladeshi Garment Workers Buried Alive](#)

The CCC deplores this senseless loss of life and calls upon the relevant stakeholders to follow-up in the short term, in relation to issues of rescue and relief efforts and compensation, and in the long term to ensure that such a preventable tragedy does not happen again.

The CCC has learned from various sources that the Spanish-based Zara (Inditex group), French-based Carrefour, Belgian-based Cotton Group, the German companies Steilmann and Neckermann, and the Dutch-based Scapino have produced their garments at Spectrum Sweater.

The CCC, in consultation with partner organizations in Bangladesh, has identified the following issues that must be followed up on in relation to this tragedy:

1. Appropriate relief and compensation: Companies sourcing at this factory must provide support to ensure that those involved in rescue and relief efforts have all the resources they need to extract survivors and the dead from the building. Companies must ensure that compensation in the amount of 200,000 taka (approx. 2,443 euros) is given to the families of the dead; compensation in

amount of 50,000 taka to the injured, as well as medical treatment. Unions have also called for the immediate payment of wages, including overtime, that was owed to workers. For more information on these demands the CCC requests that buyers consult with local organizations, such as the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers' Union Federation (BIGUF), and the Bangladesh Textile and Garment Workers League (BTGWL).

2. Full, independent and transparent investigation: A thorough investigation, with participation of local credible stakeholders, into the causes of the building collapse must take place and those responsible must be brought to justice. Such an investigation should also include looking at the failures of government, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and companies sourcing at the factory to prevent, detect, or remediate violations of construction rules and labor laws. Many of the European companies producing at Spectrum Sweaters have codes of conduct including the right to a safe and healthy workplace, and claim to regularly audit their suppliers to ensure that these standards are met. These programs have been clearly insufficient, and the dramatic failure to ensure the safety of the Spectrum workers has cost these young women and men their lives. Companies should publicly disclose their audit reports of this facility. The BGMEA should publicly disclose reports on their fire safety program at Spectrum Sweater. The investigation should yield a complete list of those who died in the factory collapse; all investigation findings should be publicly disclosed.

3. Immediate structural measures to prevent future, similar incidents: The Spectrum building collapse follows a long line of tragedies at garment factories in Bangladesh where the failure to implement safety measures has contributed to conditions that caused the death of garment workers (53 dead in 2000 at Choudury Knitwear, 24 dead in 2001 at Maico Sweater, nine dead in 2004 at Misco Supermarket, 23 dead at Shan Knitting in 2005). The CCC fears that it is becoming accepted that workers will die in the production of cheap sweaters for Western consumer markets; this is outrageous. Therefore industry, along with public authorities (at the local and international levels) must commit to launch an immediate initiative to take on the safety issues that plague the garment industry in Bangladesh, including a structural review of multi-story buildings and facilities inspection mechanisms. The CCC recommends that an independent international oversight committee/program be formed that is charged with examining occupational health and safety regulations and their implementation (including emergency regulations). Such a committee/program should be composed of people with expertise in civil engineering, health and safety, and international labor standards in the garment industry. In addition to addressing technical matters, workers' access to safe channels by which they can communicate their concerns on issues such as health and safety to their employers must also be addressed. The committee should be given a multi-year assignment in order to ensure that follow-up takes place on any recommendations that will be made.

The trade unions and NGOs active in the Clean Clothes Campaign network will continue to follow-up on this case with the companies involved. Regular public updates and calls for action to support efforts to push companies to take responsibility for the working conditions where their garments are produced will be distributed through the CCC International Urgent Action Network and posted on the CCC International website <www.cleanclothes.org>.

For more information on the Spectrum Sweater collapse please contact:

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The Clean Clothes Campaign is an international network of trade unions and NGOs that aims to improve conditions and empower workers in the global garment industry.

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