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HTUR/JS

14 December 2010

### **Killing of four RMG workers**

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the ITUC, representing 176 million workers in 156 countries and territories including Bangladesh, to protest against the killing of 4 workers in the Chittagong Economic Processing Zone (EPZ).

The ITUC has been informed that 4 RMG (Ready-made Garment) workers were killed and over 200 were injured on 12 December in violent clashes between the workers of apparel factories and members of law enforcement agencies, when the police opened fire on the protesting workers. Violence has also spread to other textile hubs in Dhaka and its suburbs-Rupgonj, Narayangonj, Savar and Gazipur. We understand that fire has broken out in one garment factory today, and there are unconfirmed reports that more workers have been killed.

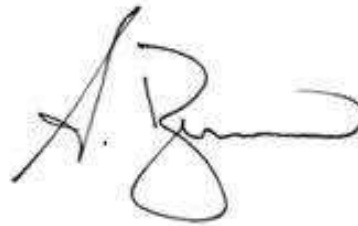
The ITUC already wrote to you in August to protest against the arrest of trade union leaders, activists and protesting workers in connection with the announcement of the proposal for minimum wages in July. The current strikes were again linked to the low and insufficient minimum wage, and ITUC is of the understanding that many MNE suppliers are not even paying the minimum wage. It would appear that some employers now accept that the minimum wage was set too low in July.

The government of Bangladesh has ratified ILO Conventions 87 and 98, and is therefore under an obligation to ensure the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The right to freedom of association cannot be exercised in the absence of other fundamental human rights, including the right to life. The government of Bangladesh has to protect workers from harm, when exercising legitimate union activity.

The ITUC urges you to order an independent investigation into these killings and to ensure that those responsible are held to account. It also urges you to order that the police allow for peaceful demonstrations and protests held by workers, and to guarantee that workers can freely exercise their fundamental rights without fear for their lives.

I thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary

Cc. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for the Ministry of Labour & Manpower and Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment