

Joint Apparel Association Forum Sri Lanka
No. 107, Hunupitiya Lake Road
Colombo 2, Sri Lanka

09. Nov 2020

Esteemed Chairman Mr. Sukumaran,

we - Sri Lanka Advocacy – are writing to you today to make an urgent appeal about the unsafe work conditions and the forced (self-) quarantine of textile workers at the Brandix Apparel Solutions Ltd. plant in Minuwangoda and workers in Free Trade Zones (FTZ) in Sri Lanka, especially in Katunayake.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, many textiles workers have been working and living under unsafe conditions without proper transmission and protective measures. So it might not come as a surprise that the biggest cluster of positive COVID-19 cases was found at a Brandix-owned factory in Minuwangoda at the end of October. It has been reported that thousands of these confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 have been forcefully quarantined in military run centres after they have been taken from their homes without warning or were asked to self-quarantine without proper notion to get rudimentary supplies for their basic needs. The quarantine centres are also lacking basic health, hygiene and food supplies and the help measures provided by the government are inadequate in quality and quantity.

Brandix Ltd. and its subsidiaries are part of a number of member associations from the Joint Apparel Association Forum Sri Lanka, e.g. the Free Trade Zone Manufacturers Association and we therefore ask you to take immediate action to ensure humanitarian relief to the workers in compulsory self-quarantine or those forcedly quarantined in centres. According to your self-declared commitment to “positive and ethical working conditions” as well as “fair labour practices and safe working conditions” which are manifested in the standards of the certification “Garments without Guilt” you awarded Brandix Ltd. and its subsidiaries in earlier years, we ask you to call on Brandix Ltd. to

- (1) provide emergency food rations, essential goods and medicines for the (self-) quarantined workers;
- (2) pay Rs. 10,000 as a health grant to workers who have lost their jobs or are currently unfit for work due to COVID-19 to compensate for a loss of income and cover medical bills;
- (3) and demand PCR testing on all workers, including those working in and around the Katunayaka Free Trade Zones.

We hope you will use this opportunity to prove you can deliver on your strategic aim to “position Sri Lanka’s Apparel Industry as a ‘Preferred Ethical Apparel Sourcing Destination” and act in line with the relevant compliances as stated on your website, namely the (a) Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production certificates of compliance, (b) Fair Trade Certification and (c) the HIGG index developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition.

Yours sincerely,



Franziska Koch for Sri Lanka Advocacy