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Global Labor Justice and Asia Floor Wage Alliance Respond to Gap and H&M Publicly Supporting an ILO Convention

Today the [Guardian](#) reported that, “Gap and H&M both would investigate the allegations [of gender based violence in their supply chains] and that they welcomed initiatives to tackle violence, including an ILO convention.” This response comes after [Asia Floor Wage Alliance \(AFWA\)](#) and [Global Labor Justice \(GLJ\)](#) issued three reports exposing gender based violence in the [Gap](#), [H&M](#) and [Walmart](#) Asian Supply Chain last week asking for public support of an ILO Convention and to meet with women led committees in the supply chain.

Jennifer (JJ) Rosenbaum, US Director of [Global Labor Justice](#) says, “In recognition of the pattern of gender based violence on their supply chains, for the first time, Gap and H&M have publicly supported an ILO convention. They are the first brands in the garment sector or any other sector where women dominate the supply chain and to publicly support an ILO Convention on Gender Based Violence. Women across the globe are waiting and watching for which brands come forward at this historic time for women workers.”

“It’s an important breakthrough for the [Asia Floor Wage Alliance](#) Women’s Committee that Gap and H&M have recognized our research and have willingly accepted to examine the supply chain in particular the suppliers that are the subject of the investigation. They know that their audits are total failures; yet they continue with them. Instead of wasting billions of dollars on audits, they need to only sit directly across the table with AFWA Women’s Leadership Committee and local unions to actually take steps to end the violence they propagate in their supply chains,” says Anannya Bhattacharjee, International Coordinator of [Asia Floor Wage Alliance](#).

Eliminating gender based violence is only possible if the due diligence and audit systems capture the gender based violence and allows for real remedy, which is not possible without collaboration with the local unions and the regional Women’s Committee of the [Asia Floor Wage Alliance](#).

“Corporate Social Responsibility and internal audits alone will not work. They did not prevent the Rana Plaza collapse. They have not prevented repeated union busting in supply chain factories. They will not prevent retaliation and threats against women workers who come forward. To eliminate gender based violence on garment supply chains, Gap, H&M and Walmart must listen to, consult, and collaborate with trade unions who are part of the Asia Floor Wage Alliance. The research shows workers’ need a union to protect women workers from any kind of violence or harassment and to support women workers’ leadership in changing these structures of production.” says Emelia Yanti Siahaan, General Secretary of the [Federation of Indonesia Trade Unions \(GSBI\)](#).

Asia Floor Wage Alliance and Global Labor Justice also urge Walmart to follow Gap and H&M in recognizing the need for an ILO convention. According to Tola Meun, Executive Director of [CENTRAL](#), “Gender based violence is a daily reality for women garment workers driven to meet unrealistic production targets in Walmart supply chains. Most of these cases are not reported due to fear of retaliation in the workplace.” With many women workers in its stores, warehouses, and supply chains across the globe, refusing to endorse the convention is failing in its obligation to make sure their workplaces are free of sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and all forms of gender based violence.

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[Global Labor Justice](#) (GLJ) is a US based strategy hub supporting transnational collaboration among worker and migrant organizations to expand labor rights and new forms of bargaining on global value chains and international labor migration corridors.

[Asia Floor Wage Alliance](#) (AFWA) was officially formed in 2006 and includes more than 76 organizations, including garment industry trade unions, NGOs, consumer groups and research institutes from more than 17 countries from across Asia, Europe and North America.

[CENTRAL](#) (The Center for Alliance of Labor & Human Rights) is a local Cambodian NGO. The organization empowers Cambodian working people to demand transparent and accountable governance for labor and human rights through legal aid and other appropriate means.