

Recognising and Eliminating Risks.

Incidents Report 2023/24

The website www.textile-incidents.info is online since mid-2024. It is part of the “Multi Actor Partnership (MAP) for improved due diligence implementation in the textile sector via Worker- and Community-based Monitoring“ with a focus on Bangladesh. However, other relevant production countries are also included. *Textile-Incidents.info* documents social and environmental violations in the supply chain at factory level and in communities surrounding the factories. The linkage to purchasing companies (brands), certifications and standards (where possible) is recorded and taken into account. The brands / certifications / standards are thus provided with relevant information to remedy the rights violations in the factories of their suppliers and improve the conditions for workers and communities in the vicinity of the factories.

Methodology

For the *Textile Incidents List*, publicly accessible, primarily English-language reports from newspapers, newsletters and web portals as well as information from partners in the production countries are analysed and suitable cases are selected. Such reports are categorised as suitable if they can be linked to at least one specific factory. There should also be a link to an international client, a multi-stakeholder initiative or a sustainability standard. The information from the Open Supply Hub is used to precisely localise the factory, which ensures better transparency.

A lack of transparency and traceability in the supply chain is one reason that limits the number of cases listed on *Textile-Incidents.info*, as often the name of a specific factory is not mentioned in published reports or no international connection to clients or certifications/standards can be found in specific cases.

About the evidence and cases - an inventory

By the end of 2024, 17 cases had been added to the website's case list. Of these cases, five were community-based cases involving environmental pollution with chemicals (PFAS) in five communities in Bangladesh. The remaining 12 cases concerned labour rights violations in six different countries (Vietnam, China, Turkey, India, Turkmenistan, Bangladesh).

In addition to the five communities, more than 38,000 workers were affected by the 17 cases. There are known supply relationships with more than 30 brands/clients (Decathlon, Columbia, Amazon, Ikea, Lion Brand Yarn, TEDi, Action, Hema, Mango, River Island, Aldi South (Hofer), Lidl, H&M, Skechers, Levi Strauss & Co.'s, Hugo Boss, Inditex, Woolworths Group, Next, Zara, GAP, Esprit, C&A Mode GmbH & Co. KG, Carrefour S.A., Tchibo GmbH, Benetton Group, Asda Stores Ltd, Bochao Group, Adler Modemärkte GmbH, GALERIA Karstadt Kaufhof GmbH, TOM TAILOR GmbH, Zalando SE).

The documented labour rights violations include

- ! dismissals (Turkey, Vietnam),
- ! sexual violence (Bangladesh),
- ! unpaid wages (Bangladesh),
- ! lack of safety at work (China),
- ! forced labour (China, Turkmenistan),
- ! violations of the right to freedom of association and discrimination against trade unions (Bangladesh, Turkey),
- ! violations of social security (Bangladesh) and
- ! exploitative working conditions (India).

Many of the factories in which the labour rights violations occurred have or had certificates or belonged to sustainability standards at the time of the last entry in the Open Supply Hub. These include SEDEX, ZDHC, OekoTex Standard 100, Higg Index, Better Cotton, Global Recycled Standard, Global Organic Textile Standard (including GOTS 6.0), Organic Content Standard, Recycled Content Standard, ISO 9001:2008, Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), ACCORD on Fire & Building Safety in Bangladesh, ISO, Social Accountability, STeP by OEKO-TEX® certified facilities and World Wide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP).

In addition, several producers are listed in the Open Supply Hub as suppliers to member companies of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (PST, German: BNT) and several are required to report under the German Supply Chain Act.

Identifying and eliminating risks - assessment and outlook

The cases listed on the website show that companies and producers using certificates and standards as part of their sustainability strategy or being part of initiatives to implement sustainability and due diligence are also affected by the aforementioned labour law and environmental violations. The information on the brands / certifications / standards comes from the websites of the production companies, among other sources, which is prone to errors (often outdated certificates, incorrect information, etc.). If we receive specific information that a certificate has been incorrectly assigned to a company, we will correct this error. If corrective measures or Corrective Action Plans (CAP) have been implemented, this will also be documented on *Textile-Incidents.info* in the Follow Up section of each case.

Based on the information available, we see a clear task for the sustainability standards mentioned in the cases to investigate the evidence in dialogue with the producers, to remedy the abuses and to create transparency about the measures taken. This should also be in the self-interest of the standards concerned.

The Follow Up section so far contains little information on how brands responded to the labour law and environmental violations described in the cases, whether they followed up on the reports and took remedial action. However, such information is important for the public and also to publicise examples of suitable remediation and future risk prevention. This includes information on how the reports were followed up and what measures were taken to resolve the specific case.

There are several reasons for the current lack of information: In some cases, there is no publicly accessible reporting on further developments - and since in many cases there is no direct contact with the workers, only the clients or stakeholders named in the individual cases could follow up on the hints or cases and pass on the measures taken as information to contact@textile-incidents.info. This has not yet happened.

It is necessary for the named clients/brands to take measures to remedy, resolve and redress grievances in order to fulfil their human rights due diligence obligations.

In a few cases, there is a follow-up, even if this is not (yet) documented on *Textile-Incidents.info*. These are cases that are published and followed up by human rights organisations such as the international Clean Clothes Campaign (union busting in Turkey 2024), or cases from the community environment (community-based) that are researched by local NGOs (such as ESDO in Bangladesh) and followed up in their local work. Only in one case (on forced labour, China) had a company (Skecher) already reacted before the Incidents List was published: Skecher emphasised that the supplier had accepted the Skecher Code of Conduct and that audits had not found any signs of forced labour. Further research into the specific supplier (Dong Guan Lu Zhou) would be necessary to ensure that there are no ongoing signs of forced labour in this company.

As civil society, we see the *Textile Incidents List* as a tool for effective risk analysis and remediation. The cases to date show the link to structural risks. Purchasing companies, standards and initiatives are just as important in solving the cases as the supervisory body of the Supply Chain Act, BAFA. We can currently state that there is a need for improvement in terms of detection, remediation, corrective action (CAP) and transparency regarding due diligence notices and cases.

In 2025, we are focusing on constructive dialogue and improvements to the individual cases and the existing structural sector risks. In Bangladesh in particular, the partners of the multi-stakeholder partnership (MAP) are prepared to advance improvement processes through meaningful stakeholder engagement.

14.02.2025