



BREAKING POINT

Wage theft, violence and excessive workloads are pushing garment workers to breaking point during the pandemic

**Clean
Clothes
Campaign**



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Cambodian Labour Conference activists protest against wage and severance theft and for union rights during the Pay Your Workers week of action. March 2021

INTRODUCTION

This research provides a snapshot of how workers in Nike, Primark, and H&M’s supply chains have been impacted during the pandemic in terms of their wages, working conditions, and labour rights.

The research links the struggles of workers in Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia directly to the wealthy brands who have profited from their labour. When reports provide a generalised overview of the industry, brands often deny that reported violations occur within their own supply chains, defending their business models with unsubstantiated claims. While this report takes a deeper dive into three brands’ supply chains, we recognise that many other garment brands have similar violations in their supply chains.

BREAKING POINT: WAGE THEFT, VIOLENCE AND EXCESSIVE WORKLOADS ARE PUSHING GARMENT WORKERS TO BREAKING POINT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Big brands rely heavily on sub-contracting production to low-income countries with low wages and minimal social protections for workers, avoiding their responsibility to workers in supply chains. However, in a model where brands dictate prices and purchasing practices, they often function as *de facto* employers and must be held accountable.

Our research shows that wage theft during the pandemic has occurred in Nike, Primark, and H&M’s supply chains. Brands are clearly not doing enough to protect workers from the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Furthermore, workers report increased production targets, unsafe working conditions, and harassment from management.

Put simply, brands and factories are pushing workers beyond their breaking point during the pandemic.

COVID-19 AND THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, global brands have failed to protect the workers in their supply chains, as they initially refused to pay for over \$40bn worth of goods.¹ Mass cancellations, delayed payments, and discounts imposed on suppliers sent financial shockwaves through the industry and had a devastating impact on garment workers. Globally, garment workers are owed billions in unpaid wages, bonuses, and severance since the pandemic began.² While many major brands, although certainly not all, have since agreed to pay in full for orders that had already been in production (as evidenced on the Worker Rights Consortium tracker), they have not committed to ensuring that workers within their supply chains receive their regular wages throughout the pandemic.³ This is despite the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) calling on brands to publicly commit to wage assurance as part of the Pay Your Workers campaign.⁴



There is ample evidence of the hardship and injustice inflicted on workers throughout the pandemic, caused by brands' business decisions. In 2020, the Asia Floor Wage Alliance documented the havoc caused to global supply chains during the initial months of the pandemic; in particular, how the cancellation of orders and delayed payments led to non-payment of wages.⁵ The Clean Clothes Campaign further highlighted the impact of brands' behaviour on workers' pay, (estimating that workers were owed at least \$3.19 to \$5.79bn from the first three months of the pandemic alone.⁶

As the pandemic progressed, the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) identified 31 factories that deprived 37,637 workers of an estimated \$39.8m in severance theft. From analysis of a larger sample of factory closures and mass dismissals, they project that garment workers globally are already owed between \$500m and \$850m in unpaid severance.⁷ WRC also found that 77% of 396 workers interviewed across nine countries reported that they, or a member of their household, had gone hungry since the beginning of the pandemic.⁸ Job loss, wage theft, and severance theft is pushing millions of garment workers into destitution.

WAGES IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

Before the pandemic, wages in the garment industry were at notoriously low levels for decades. Most workers were not able to meet their basic needs and live with dignity. Even when workers were paid the minimum wage in production countries, this amount fell far short of the wages needed to support a worker and their family.

When setting minimum wages, governments balance the needs of workers with the need to remain competitive in the global market. Global brands have been complicit in suppressing minimum wages through chasing the lowest production prices around the world and thus incentivising governments to attract their clientele through low wages. As a result, minimum wage rates often bear no relation to the cost of living, and are set far below the amount that we would consider a living wage.

- In Cambodia, the minimum wage for garment workers is \$192 per month, following a \$2 increase in January 2021. However, the living wage in Cambodia is estimated to be \$588 per month.⁹
- In Bangladesh, the minimum wage for garment workers is currently \$94 per month. Manufacturers are urging the government to suspend a 5% increase that was planned for 2021. This amount is significantly lower than the living wage for Bangladesh, estimated to be \$569 per month.¹⁰
- In Indonesia, the minimum wage varies regionally between \$120- \$298 per month, following an increase in January 2020. The estimated living wage for Indonesia is \$503 per month.¹¹

This means that the wages in the garment industry are already set at poverty level. Even the smallest decrease in pay can push a worker and their family into destitution. When considering payment of overtime hours and bonuses in this context, it becomes clear that these payments are an integral part of a worker's basic income and should not be considered as 'optional extras' that brands or factories can disregard.



BRANDS: NIKE, PRIMARK, AND H&M

Three brands were selected to include in this research: Nike, Primark, and H&M. All three companies have returned to making considerable profits in past months. In November 2020, Primark owner Associated British Foods reported a £914m (approximately \$1.288bn) profit before tax for 2020.¹² H&M Group announced an operating profit of SEK 3,099m SEK (approximately \$373m) for 2020,¹³ and Nike's net income for the 12 months ending on 28 February 2021, was \$3.428bn.¹⁴ Despite these profits, all three brands have been repeatedly associated with workers' reports of labour rights violations and wage theft throughout the pandemic, as evidenced by information compiled in the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) live-blog.¹⁵

Primark was quick to cancel orders already placed with factories when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and most clothing shops in Europe and the US closed. Sources indicate that Primark cancelled roughly £1.6bn (\$2.3bn) in orders. After severe criticism from global campaign groups including the CCC Network, a month after the cancellations, Primark announced that it had created a fund to help pay the wages of workers in seven countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam – linked to orders that were due for shipment.¹⁶ Primark did not elaborate what payment mechanisms were put in place to ensure that the £23m (\$32.6m) fund reached all workers or how the brand calculated how much it had to pay. When Primark was eventually forced into paying

for all outstanding orders in full, it released a statement essentially re-branding the wage fund as an 'advance payment' for wages.¹⁷

H&M and Nike both committed to pay in full for all orders, completed and in production, at the onset of the Covid-19 crisis. However, CCC's live-blog has documented labour rights violations, including non-payment of wages, in both brands' supply chains. Honouring existing agreements is the bare minimum that brands should have done over the past year; however, brands also have a responsibility under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to prevent and remedy human rights violations (including non-payment of wages) within their supply chains.¹⁸



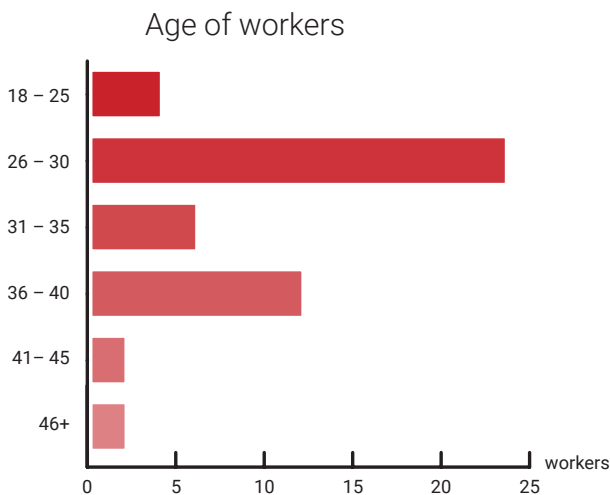
Indonesian union SPN urges Nike to make sure workers in their supply chain are paid their full wages.



Activists of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity urge Nike, Primark, and H&M to ensure garment workers are paid what they are owed. November 2020.

SUMMARY REPORT

In total, 49 workers were interviewed across 14 factories in three countries. Thirty-eight of the workers are women and 11 are men, reflecting the fact that the majority of workers in this industry are women. The demographics of the interviewees echo the typical age structure among garment workers in these countries:



METHODOLOGY

This research report presents the findings of interviews into garment workers' wages in three countries during the pandemic. The CCC worked with local researchers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Indonesia to interview 49 workers from 11 factories.

Nike, Primark, and H&M's supply chains were chosen for investigation due to the high number of reports of worker rights violations in their supply chains during the pandemic, and their leading roles as major recognisable brands in the garment industry.¹⁹ Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia were selected for the research as Cambodia and Bangladesh have a large number of factories producing for Primark and H&M, whilst Indonesia has a large number of factories producing for Nike.

The impact of Covid-19 hit production countries from January 2020 on, when the transportation of raw materials from China started to be disrupted. This resulted in temporary factory closures across South-East Asia. Following this, many brands cancelled orders and delayed payments throughout 2020 and 2021. Therefore, we have included factories that Primark, Nike and/ or H&M were sourcing from at any point in 2020 or 2021.

Interviewees were recruited through a snowball sampling technique. Researchers worked with local NGO contacts to identify initial interview subjects, and each interviewee in turn was asked to recommend additional interview subjects among their co-workers and acquaintances.

All interviews were carried out in local languages. Interviews took place face-to-face, away from factory grounds, in NGO facilities or in workers' homes where possible. However, some interviews in Bangladesh were conducted by phone, in line with pandemic-related public health guidelines. All interviews were conducted between 6 March and 9 April 2021.

ESTIMATING WAGE THEFT

For the purpose of this research, we asked workers to estimate the money still owed to them during the pandemic. It is important to note that workers might underestimate the amounts legally owed, as well as the overall income gap they experienced during the crisis, if they were not keeping complete records.

Although it is easy to know how much of a base wage was not paid, it is much more challenging to factor in lost overtime, variable bonuses, and other benefits that workers lost. While the estimates in this report are therefore credible, the actual situation could be even worse than pictured.

KEY FINDINGS

Out of the 49 workers who were interviewed for this research:

- 29 are paid less now than they were before the pandemic.
- 34 have experienced periods during the past year when they were not paid their full wages.
- 33 estimate that they are collectively still owed \$5,377 in unpaid wages, an average of \$163 for each worker.

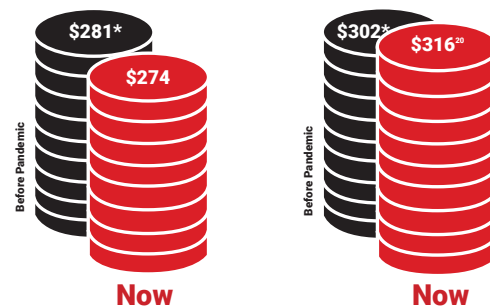
The data below shows that wage theft has occurred in each brands' supply chain, along with a general decrease in take-home wages for workers.

NIKE

Out of 21 workers interviewed who made clothes for Nike, 13 claimed that they were still owed wages from a period(s) during the pandemic. The 13 workers estimated they were still owed a total of \$1527, which works out to an average of \$117 for each of these workers.

In addition to the wages owed to the 13 workers, the table below shows an overall decrease in the base wages that workers are paid. Whilst there is an increase in the workers' take-home pay with bonuses and overtime, this largely reflects an overtime payment from five workers at Eagle Nice factory in Indonesia.

Average basic wage Average basic wage
with bonuses and overtime



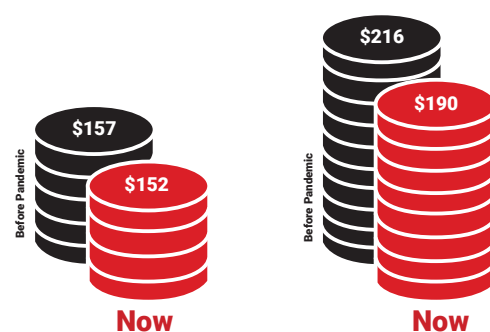
* Excluding one worker who had worked less than a full month before pandemic.

PRIMARK

Out of 12 workers interviewed who made clothes for Primark, 11 claimed that they were still owed wages from a period(s) during the pandemic. The 11 workers estimated they were still owed a total of \$2890, which works out at an average of \$263 for each worker still owed wages. All three of the countries included in this report were covered by Primark's 'wage fund'.

The table below shows an overall decrease in both the base wages that workers are paid, and a decrease in their take-home pay with bonuses and overtime.

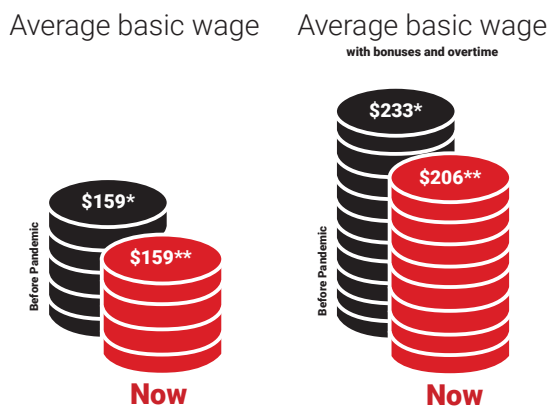
Average basic wage Average basic wage
with bonuses and overtime



H&M

Out of 26 workers interviewed who made clothes for H&M, 18 claimed that they were still owed wages from a period(s) during the pandemic. The 18 workers estimated they were still owed a total of \$2368, which works out at an average of \$132 for each worker still owed wages.

As with Primark, the table below shows an overall decrease in both the base wages that workers are paid, and a decrease in their total take-home pay, including bonuses and overtime.



* Excluding one worker who was on maternity leave at the beginning of the pandemic and gave salary details from March 2019, and one worker who was not employed for a full month prior to the pandemic.

** Excluding one worker who had lost his job for protesting the reduced salary during the lockdown and is now unemployed.

The significance of a decrease in pay cannot be underestimated for garment workers and their families, who were already just surviving on poverty wages. Clearly global brands, including Nike, Primark, and H&M, are not doing enough to ensure that garment workers do not have to pay the financial price for the pandemic.

As well as the wage theft highlighted above, the worker interviews detailed in this report demonstrate labour rights violations, including the failure by brands and factories to put in place effective measures to protect workers from Covid-19, and an attack on workers' rights to join unions and bargain collectively.

KEY DEMANDS FOR BRANDS

In light of this research, we renew our demands for Nike, Primark, and H&M – and all other garment brands – to take action on the following steps.²¹

1. All apparel, textile, footwear, and logistics workers, who were employed at the onset of the crisis, regardless of employment status, should be paid their legally mandated wages and benefits, including severance payments and arrears, for the duration of the pandemic;
2. Brands, retailers, e-tailers and employers should negotiate directly with unions in the sector on an enforceable agreement on wage assurance, severance guarantee fund, and basic labour rights, to fill the pandemic-era wage gap, ensure workers who are terminated receive their full severance, support stronger social protections for all workers, and ensure basic labour rights are respected;
3. As part of this agreement brands, retailers and e-tailers, having profited from exploitative labour practices for decades, should commit to a price premium on future orders;
4. Brands, retailers, and e-tailers must ensure that specific Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) plans are implemented and monitored, ensuring the right to paid sick leave if the workers or their dependents become symptomatic, and a policy by the employer to allow the closure of the premises if workers become infected with Covid-19;
5. Brands, retailers, and e-tailers must change the current pricing model and underlying business model. These changes include order stability that allows for proper planning, timely payments of orders, and full respect for workers' rights. It also includes a costing model that covers all the costs of social compliance: ranging from living wages and benefits, to social protection and worker safety.



The National Garment Worker Federation in Bangladesh protests for the reinstatement of 3000 retrenched workers of the Windy Group, June 2020.

CHAPTER ONE: SQUEEZING WORKERS' WAGES

THE CONTINUING IMPACT OF COVID-19 INFECTIONS ON WORKERS' WAGES

As the graph below shows, the rate of Covid-19 infections has impacted each country at different times. Bangladesh experienced a wave of infections early into the pandemic, peaking in June, July, and November 2020, and again in April 2021. Indonesia experienced a spike of infections in February 2021. Cambodia managed to keep the infection rate very low until April 2021, before a dramatic increase.

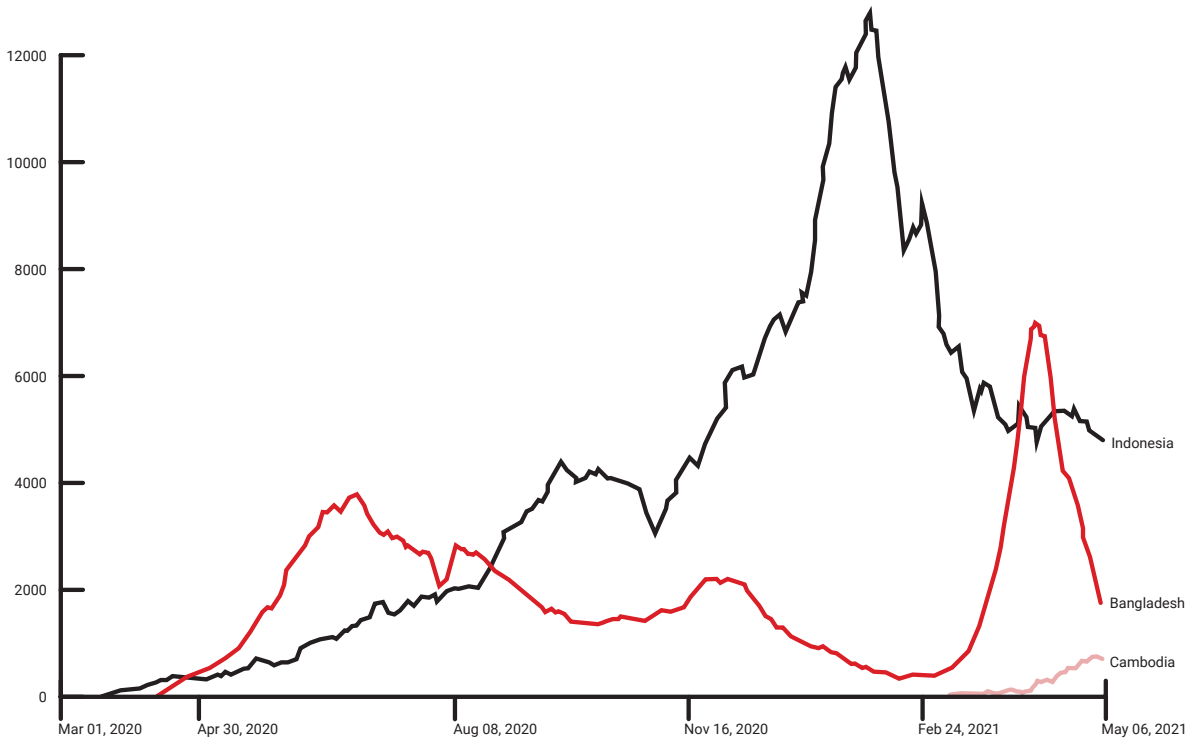
The rates of infection are reflected in our research, with four workers (or their close family or contacts) in Indonesia becoming unwell with Covid-19 symptoms, and one worker in Bangladesh. At the time of our research, no

workers interviewed (or close family or contacts) in Cambodia had become unwell with Covid-19 symptoms. The differences, as well as the different government responses and lockdowns in each country, are important to consider.

Without intervention, and vastly increased access to vaccines, it is likely that garment-producing countries will continue to be hit with the emergence of new variants, national lockdowns, and factory closures due to Covid-19, accelerating the wage theft detailed in this report.²² Therefore, it is likely that the information contained in this report will show only the beginning of a downward trend in wages, and a growing trend in wage theft and erosion of worker rights.

Daily new confirmed Covid-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is the lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.





CAMBODIA: NIKE, PRIMARK AND H&M

This data is collected from interviews with 16 workers from four factories in Cambodia:

- Apple Apparel: H&M
- Berry Apparel: Nike and H&M
- Roo Hsing Garment Company: H&M
- Chea Sinat Garment Company: Primark

Please see Appendix 1 for more information on factories and evidence of which brands they supply.

Thirteen of the workers are members of a trade union, two are not members of a trade union and one worker is unsure if they are a member of a trade union.

CAMBODIA

Out of 16 workers:

- 4 are paid less now than they were before the pandemic.
- 8 have had periods where they have not been paid their full wages in the last year.
- 2 did not receive their full wages for over 3 months.
- 7 estimate that they are collectively still owed \$2,672 in unpaid wages.

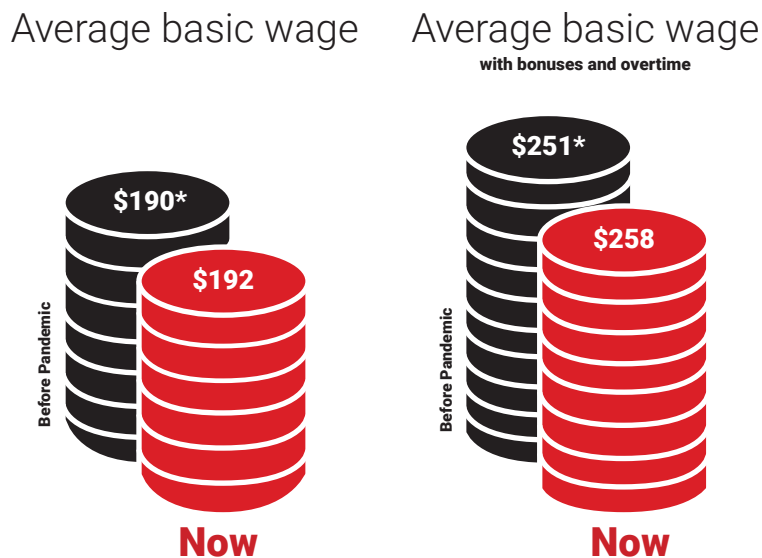
WAGES

Fourteen workers were paid the minimum wage of \$190 per month, excluding bonuses and overtime, prior to the pandemic. This figure excludes two outliers: one worker was on maternity leave in the months prior to the pandemic and gave her salary details from March 2019 (basic wage \$182), and one worker was not employed for a full month prior to the pandemic. All 16 workers stated that their current take-home salary, excluding bonuses and overtime is \$192, the minimum wage since 2021.

Including bonuses and overtime, workers were paid on average \$251 per month before the pandemic. This average again excludes the two outliers described above.

The current average salary of the 16 workers, including bonuses and overtime, is \$258. Despite the average national minimum wage increasing, four workers experienced a drop in actual take-home pay including bonuses and overtime, ranging between \$1-50 per month, with an average of \$26 per worker. Three out of four of the workers who reported a drop in pay also reported periods when their employer did not pay them their full salary.

Cambodia Wages



**Excluding one worker who was on maternity leave at the beginning of the pandemic and gave salary details from March 2019, and one worker who was not employed for a full month prior to the pandemic.*

WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Eight workers were not able to work for a period due to factory closures, national lockdowns, work suspensions, or reduced capacity.

None of the workers interviewed missed work during the pandemic due to becoming unwell with Covid-19, or having to self-isolate after they, a family member or a close contact developed Covid-19 symptoms, as Cambodia had a relatively low rate of infections until a steep increase in April 2021.

WAGE SHORTFALL

Eight workers stated that, since the pandemic had begun, there had been periods of time when they did not receive their full salaries from their employer. This was linked to external factors, such as factory closures, national lockdowns, work suspensions, or reduced production capacity. These workers were employed at Roo Hsing Garment Company (1), Berry Apparel (3), and Chea Sinat Garment Company (4).

Five workers did not receive their full salary for a one-month period, and another worker did not receive their full salary from the employer for one month and 10 days.

Two workers did not receive their full salaries for longer periods of time due to long-term illness: the first was four months, and a second worker did not receive their salary for three periods, totalling eight months. Both workers worked for Chea Sinat Garment Company. They are also the only two workers out of all interviewees who were aged 45 years old and over.

In March 2020, the Cambodian government announced that garment workers should receive 60% of their wages during factory closures: 40% from their employer and 20% from the government, working out to at least \$114 per month.²³ Just one month later in April 2020, the government changed this to a flat payment of \$70 per month.²⁴ Of the eight workers who did not receive their full salary, six were paid \$70 per month in line with the latter government guidelines. This payment consisted of a \$30 payment from the factory and



Worker in a factory in Bangladesh on 1 May 2021 calls for social security.

a \$40 payment from the government. Another worker received a payment of \$90 solely from the factory; as the factory submitted her claim for the government payment late, she was not entitled to the \$40 payment. One worker did not answer this question.

Seven out of the eight garment workers who did not receive their full salaries estimate that they are still owed a total of \$2,672.

The workers who did not receive their salaries for one month estimate that they are still owed payments between \$129-220. The workers who did not receive their full salary for four months and eight months, estimate that they are still owed \$628 and \$1,176 respectively. One worker did not answer this question.



INDONESIA: NIKE

This data is collected from interviews with 17 workers from three factories in Indonesia:

- Nikomas Gemilang
- Eagle Nice Indonesia
- Victory Chingluh Indonesia.

All factories are suppliers for Nike (see Appendix 1)

Fifteen of the workers are members of a trade union and two are not members of a trade union.

WAGES

Before the pandemic, workers were paid an average of \$297 per month, excluding bonuses and overtime. This consisted of a municipality specific minimum wage, a sectoral minimum wage, and a working allowance linked to the number of years worked.

The current average take-home salary, excluding bonuses and overtime, is \$294. All workers stated that they no longer received the sectoral minimum wage component of around \$7-8 per month.

Including bonuses and overtime, before the pandemic, workers were paid on average \$308 per month. The current average salary of workers, including bonuses and overtime, is \$322. However, the data shows that while five of the workers' pay (including bonuses and overtime) has increased by \$93 due to overtime worked, the remaining 12 workers have experienced a decrease in take-home pay of \$9. Five workers' take-home salary decreased by over \$15 per month.

INDONESIA

Out of 17 workers:

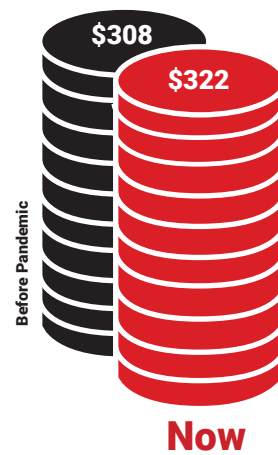
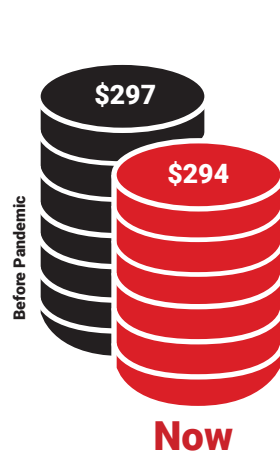
- 17 no longer receive the sectoral minimum wage.
- 12 are paid less now than they were before the pandemic.
- 10 have had periods where they have not been paid their full wages in the last year.
- 10 estimate that they are collectively still owed a total of \$935 in unpaid wages.

Indonesia Wages

Average basic wage

Average basic wage

with bonuses and overtime





WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Seven workers were not able to work for a period of time due to factory closures, national lockdowns, work suspensions, or reduced capacity. The average period that they were not able to work was 21 days. Three workers received their normal wages excluding bonuses and overtime during this period, whilst four workers received a payment, but not their full wages.

Four workers interviewed missed work during the pandemic due to becoming unwell with Covid-19, or having to self-isolate after they, a family member, or a close contact developed Covid-19 symptoms. The average period that they were not able to work was 19 days. Three workers stated that they received their normal wages excluding bonuses and overtime during this period, whilst one worker said they received a payment, but not their full wages.

WAGE SHORTFALL

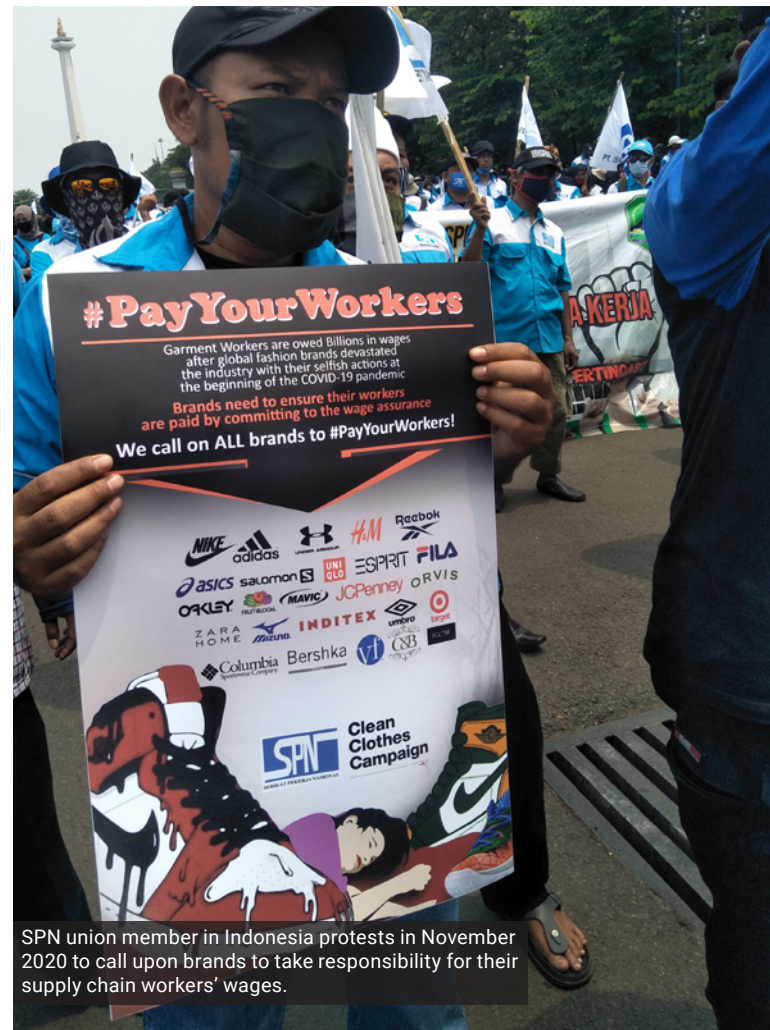
Ten workers stated that since the pandemic had begun, there had been periods of time when they did not receive their full salary from their employer, coinciding with periods they were not able or allowed to work. These workers were employed at Nikomas Gemilang (4) and Victory Chingluh Indonesia (6).

The average period that workers did not receive their full pay was 5.3 weeks. Four workers had their wages cut by 15% for two months; this cut was applied to all production, mechanic, and office staff in Victory Chingluh Indonesia. Three workers did not receive their full wages for two weeks, two workers did not receive their full pay for one month, and one worker did not receive their full pay for one and a half months. On average, workers were paid \$234 per month for the period that they were not paid their full wages from their employer, \$63 less than pre-pandemic basic pay, and \$74 less than pre-pandemic pay including bonuses and overtime.

Of the 10 workers, six workers who were employed by Victory Chingluh received two monthly payments of \$41 per month from the

Social State Security Agency. Factories were able to apply for social assistance for workers if they could evidence that the factory was affected by Covid-19. Victory Chingluh used the mass-layoffs of apprentice workers to evidence the impact. Workers shared that, thus far, there have been three stages of mass layoffs in Victory Chingluh, resulting in thousands of job losses, which have also been reported in the media.²⁵

The 10 garment workers who did not receive their full salaries estimate that they are still owed a total of \$935.



SPN union member in Indonesia protests in November 2020 to call upon brands to take responsibility for their supply chain workers' wages.



SQUEEZING WORKERS' WAGES

BANGLADESH: H&M AND NIKE

This data is collected from interviews with 16 workers from seven factories in Bangladesh:

- Yunusco Group: Primark and H&M
- Abanti Colour Tex: H&M
- Fountain Garment Manufacturing: H&M
- Fashion Forum: Primark
- Ananta Denim Technology: Primark and H&M
- Windy Apparels: Primark and H&M
- Sharmin Apparels: H&M

See Appendix 1 for more information on factories.

Nine of the workers are members of a trade union and seven are not members of a trade union.

BANGLADESH

Out of 16 workers:

- 16 have had their basic salary reduced.
- 13 are paid less now than they were before the pandemic.
- 16 have had periods where they have not been paid their full wages in the last year.
- 16 estimate that they are collectively still owed a total of \$1770 in unpaid wages.

WAGES

Before the pandemic, workers were paid an average of \$135 per month, excluding bonuses and overtime. The current average take-home salary, excluding bonuses and overtime, is \$128. This excludes the data from one worker who lost his job and submitted his final salary in place of a current one.

Including bonuses and overtime, before the pandemic, workers were paid on average \$217 per month. The current average salary of the workers, including bonuses and overtime is \$150. This average excludes the same outlier as described above.

Prior to the pandemic, workers used to do 50 to 200 hours of overtime per month; however, this has drastically reduced. None of the workers have received their annual leave pay during the pandemic. This payment varied each year and in 2019, the amount for annual leave was \$24-36.

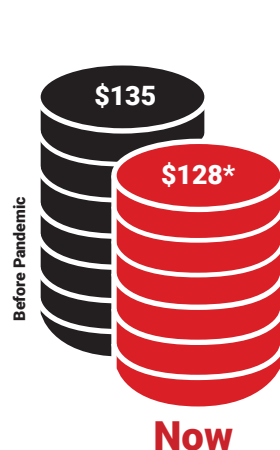
The data shows that 13 workers have experienced an average decrease in pay (including bonuses and overtime) of \$82 per month. Eleven workers' take-home salary decreased by over \$50 per month, whilst three workers' take-home salary decreased by over \$100 per month, almost half their average take-home salary from before the pandemic.

Bangladesh Wages

Average basic wage

Average basic wage

with bonuses and overtime





SQUEEZING WORKERS' WAGES

WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

All 16 workers stated that they were not able to work for a period due to factory closures, national lockdowns, work suspensions, or reduced production capacity.

Eleven workers did not work for a one-month period, three workers for a period of two months, and two workers for a period of three months. The average period that all workers were not able to work was 40 days. All the workers received a payment, but not their full wages.

One worker interviewed missed work during the pandemic due to becoming unwell with Covid-19, or having to self-isolate, after she, a family member, or a close contact developed Covid-19 symptoms. She had been off work for five days on the date of the interview and was still waiting for payment for this period.

WAGE SHORTFALL

All 16 workers stated that since the pandemic had begun, there had been periods of time when they did not receive their full salary from their employer. All these workers also had periods where they were unable to work due to Covid-19 restriction in place (16), or due to Covid-19 related ill health (1).

The average period that workers did not receive their full pay was six weeks. The period the workers were not paid their full wages correlates with the periods that they were unable to work due to factory closures, national lockdowns, work suspensions or reduced capacity. On average, workers were paid \$66 per month for the period that they were not paid their full wages from their employer. None of the workers interviewed received any direct payments from other sources, such as the government.

Initially, the workers claimed that they did not have any unpaid wages, despite not being paid their full wages during factory closure or illness. This was because the factory management had made it clear that they would not receive full pay for these periods. However, when asked about their overall shortfall in wages during the pandemic, the 16 workers estimate their collective shortfall in wages to be \$1770 dollars. This amounts to an average of \$111 in unpaid wages per worker.

The workers who did not receive their salaries for three months estimate that they are still owed payments between \$330-340. The workers who did not receive their full salary for two months estimate that they are still owed payments between \$174-180, and the workers who did not receive their full salaries for one month estimate that they are owed between \$39-144.

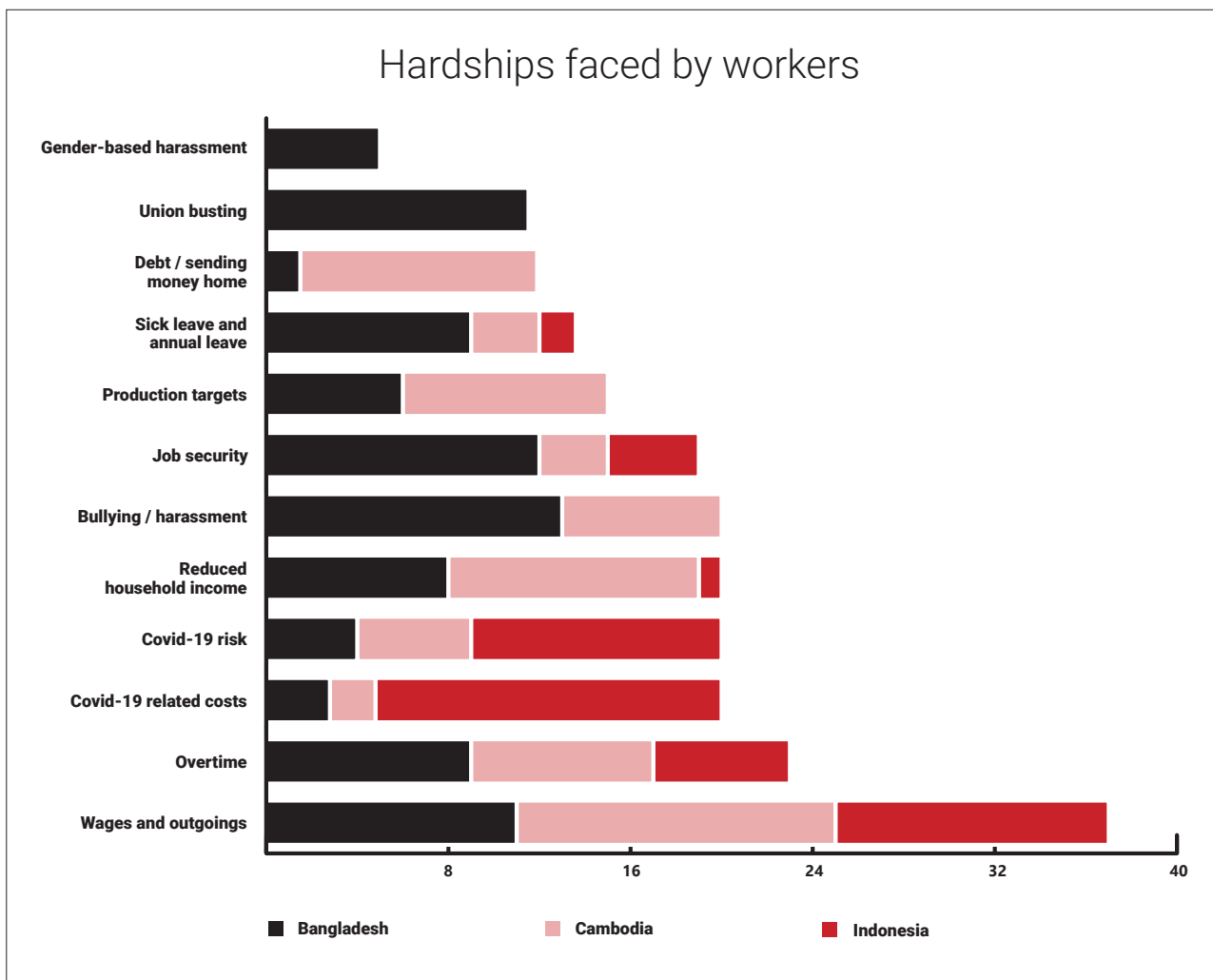


Worker of the BIGUF union in Bangladesh protests in November 2020 holding a protest sign saying: Laid off workers need to be reinstated.



Activists of the SPN union in Indonesia call upon brands to take responsibility for workers' wages, November 2020.

CHAPTER TWO: WORKERS' EXPERIENCES OF HARDSHIP DURING COVID-19





WORKERS' EXPERIENCES OF HARDSHIP DURING COVID-19

WAGES: INCREASING COST OF LIVING AND DECREASING WAGES

The most common theme across all the data, cited by 37 interviewees, was that workers are struggling to survive on their low wages, which do not cover their living costs. Poverty wages pre-date the Covid-19 crisis but have been exacerbated by the non-payment of wages, pay cuts, and lack of overtime evidenced in this report. Wages were set at the lowest possible rate before the pandemic, meaning that many garment workers were already living in poverty. Therefore, even a seemingly small decrease in monthly wages can have a massive bearing on a garment worker and their family. The workers' testimony shows the huge impact that wage theft has had on their lives and their families. It also shows the long-term impact as families borrow money to pay for essentials, mounting up personal debt.

In addition, workers talked about the rising costs of basic necessities such as food, water, and electricity. Rising prices are partly due to inflation, but also increased demand for necessities during national lockdowns.²⁶ Recent reports show that the price of rice increased by over 30% in some parts of Cambodia during the pandemic.²⁷ The Consumer Association of Bangladesh reports that living costs overall rose by 3.49% in May–September 2020.²⁸

>>With or without Covid-19, our minimum wage is already too low. Our 2021 wage is reduced, because there is no more sectoral minimum wage.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>Our income has declined a lot. We cannot work extra hours anymore. We always work under fear of dismissal due to reduced orders. We demand our full wages during the pandemic. The tendency to cut workers' salary in times of crisis should be stopped.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>I have to pay debt, water, and electricity bills monthly, but my wages are not enough. I don't want to see high production targets with a decreasing number of workers to meet them. We don't have enough income to pay for our basic living costs.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Cambodia

During the Covid-19 crisis, 20 workers shared that their salary now needs to cover increased expenses due to family members losing employment or income during the pandemic. Several of the workers' partners had previously been working in jobs which brought in a daily income, such as driving a tuk tuk. However, due to the pandemic, many of these roles have become obsolete in the past year. Interviewees also stressed that it was difficult for spouses or family members to find new work during the pandemic.

In addition to a reduced household income, 12 workers cited mounting debt or having to send money home as an issue. Several of the workers have borrowed money from relatives or the bank to cover costs during periods when they have not worked and are still struggling to pay this off.

>>My husband runs a small shop. Last year he suffered a heavy loss due to the lockdown. I received half of my salary for one month last year. At that time, my husband's shop was also closed due to lockdown. I had to borrow from my relatives to feed my two children at that time. I still have not been able to repay the debt.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Bangladesh

>>My husband is retired, and my son is scared of becoming infected with Covid-19. He is a tuk tuk driver and he only works at night now but there are not many passengers to use the service. I am the only one bringing income into the home. I am stressed.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Cambodia

>>My husband got laid-off because of the pandemic. Now I'm the only breadwinner, while our household expenses have increased. My husband worked in a pulp and paper factory before he was dismissed last year. The reason is because of the pandemic. He is still struggling to find another job<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>My wife is also a garment worker, but she works at a different factory and her work was suspended for 20 days. Now she is staying at home to look after our baby (aged three months). Our living condition is bad because we have to pay debts of \$100 every month.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

In addition to a reduction in household income during the pandemic, 20 workers explained that their monthly outgoings were increasing due to pandemic-related costs, including buying facemasks and sanitiser, paying for internet packages to ensure that their children could continue learning during school closures, and paying for Covid-19 tests and treatment. This theme was most prominent in Indonesia, with 15 workers citing a rise in costs.

>>Due to Covid-19, school isn't open. My son has to study online. He cannot catch up. I think online study is not effective. We only have one smart phone, and I take it with me when I go to work. Therefore, my son can only study and do his homework after I return home.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Nike in Cambodia

>>[The factory owners] know very well that our house rent and the price of commodities did not decrease during the pandemic. Still, the first thing they did to tackle the pandemic was to cut our salary. This is a blatant injustice.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>My family lives together in our house. We have two children and a mortgage. Our children do not go to school. They stay at home and study online, and we have to buy internet data for them. This additional expense, which is quite expensive, can take around 10 percent from our wages.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>We have to work during the pandemic. Some of our co-workers got infected and had to pay for all the tests by themselves.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia



**PRODUCTION: INCREASING TARGETS AND
A DECREASING WORKFORCE**

Twenty-three workers talked about overtime hours, and the lack of pay for overtime, as a hardship. Due to the low minimum wages in the garment sector, many workers rely on overtime to top up their salary in order to survive. Overtime should always be voluntary, never mandatory, and always be paid.

Several workers at Eagle Nice factory in Indonesia spoke of having to do two hours mandatory overtime every day throughout the pandemic. Six workers in Cambodia stated that they were not offered enough overtime during the pandemic to meet their basic living costs. Several workers in Bangladesh stated that they were no longer offered overtime, whilst workers from Windy Apparels (producing for Primark and H&M) said the factory management no longer paid overtime on holidays or weekends, with order cancellations related to Covid-19 cited as the reason.

>>Since February 2020, we are working two hours overtime a day on top of our eight-hour working day, five days a week. But our wage is still not enough. We need the overtime payment to be increased.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>We work such long hours. Eight hours a day, with two (sometimes more) hours mandatory overtime and only a one-hour break. I have to wake up at 4 am, and leave to go to the factory at 5.30 am. I arrive at the factory at 6.30 (with heavy traffic jams in nearby factory area), and start work at 7 am. I get out from factory at 6 pm; after buying some food, I arrive at home around 8 pm.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>I don't have overtime work, so I can't earn more. I have to pay rent, water, and electric bills every month.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>Unfortunately, we get paid only for overtime hours on weekdays, but our work on the holidays or weekends is not counted as overtime. These are counted as regular working days.<<

Worker producing for Primark and H&M in Bangladesh

>>The factory shouldn't discriminate when giving overtime work. Unlike others, I don't get that. I am a piece-rate worker. I don't get overtime like others, and I get scolded if I cannot meet the production target. It is true that the production target is increasing and there are less workers than before to complete it.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Cambodia

>>My income has declined a lot. Without overtime it will be impossible for me to pay for my three children's education.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

Workers in Cambodia (9) and Bangladesh (6) spoke of rising production targets. During the pandemic, many factories have undertaken mass-layoffs, or furloughed significant proportions of their workforce in response to order cancellations and insecurity caused by the pandemic. This means that the remaining workers have had to work harder when orders resumed, especially as factories attempt to make up for lost income during order cancellations.

In Cambodia, several of the workers said that they were expected to produce either the same amount or more, with a smaller workforce. In Bangladesh, workers spoke of increasing production targets without any overtime payment, meaning that workers must now produce significantly more garments in their regular hours.

>>Currently, we are working under immense pressure. In 2020, our production was severely affected by Covid-19 lockdown. Since August 2020, factory management has almost doubled our production target. For instance, I used to produce 160-170 pieces of underwear per day before 2020. Now I must produce at least 250 pieces per day. However, the factory management does not allow us to do overtime anymore. They said that they do not have sufficient funds to pay us for overtime. So, we have to produce these 250 pieces of clothing within our regular working time – i.e. within eight to ten hours. If any of us fail to produce this number of clothes, we face severe verbal abuse from the management.<<

Worker producing for Primark and H&M in Bangladesh

>>The production target may stay the same as it is now, but the factory should place the same amount of workers in my section as before the pandemic to complete the target. Originally, our section had four people but now it's reduced to three or sometimes two and a half – as one person keeps on rotating to different sections as needed. It is now more work, but less money.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>When Covid-19 hit the industry, some workers got dismissed or laid off, I am lucky that I didn't. However, the production target keeps rising while the number of workers decreases (where there were 20 garment workers before, now there are 17).<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

THE THREAT OF COVID-19 INFECTION AND DENIAL OF SICK LEAVE

During the pandemic, many garment factories have failed to put measures in place to protect workers from becoming infected with Covid-19. Unions in production countries across the world have demanded increased safety measures. Whilst many brands have published statements laying out their expectations for suppliers to ensure that workplaces meet best practice on social distancing, staying at home when sick, hand washing, and use of personal protective equipment, there is little evidence of actions brands have taken to support the implementation or enforcement of these measures.²⁹

Across the three countries, 20 workers expressed a fear of becoming infected with Covid-19. In some cases, this related directly to conditions in the factories including lack of social distancing, lack of sick pay to ensure that infected colleagues could self-isolate, and the absence of masks and sanitiser. Others spoke of their fear of becoming unwell and the impact this would have on themselves and their families. In Bangladesh particularly, workers feared that they could never afford testing and treatment for Covid-19 if they should need it.



Bangladeshi garment worker protesting for her wage to be paid, March 2021.

>>I am scared of becoming infected because we have thumb prints for our attendance on a device shared by other hundreds of workers.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>We work without social distancing, and we never know if someone on the production line gets infected as there is no Covid-19 testing at all. In the production line, no one knows who is infected or not. We never have a test. Only in the office they have regular tests.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>Every day the number of Covid-19 deaths is rising in Bangladesh. The treatment cost and diagnosis cost are far beyond our reach... If any of our workers get infected with Covid-19, they have to be taken to Dhaka which is a very costly affair. I can tell you that if I get infected with Covid-19 today, I may die of it without any treatment. It is not possible for me to spend thousands of taka for tests and medicine. Yet still, we are going to the factory to continue production, risking our lives.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Bangladesh

>>For me, I don't always take care of my young baby because I don't dare touch her. I am afraid I might transmit the disease if I happen to have it – I don't know. It is a big concern because the factory is crowded with people.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>Covid-19 makes our work more dangerous, because we don't have regular testing and social distancing at all... I'm afraid to get infected, but I have no choice.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>What I know about Covid-19 is that its treatment is extremely expensive and all the hospitals are full with Covid-19 patients. It is impossible for me to afford treatment if I get infected with Covid-19. And all the workers in this factory are extremely vulnerable to infection. Unfortunately, our factory management acts like there is nothing called Covid-19 in this country. So, they are not taking any precautions to keep workers safe. However, when it comes to increasing our salary, they give us the excuse of financial loss due to Covid-19.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Primark in Bangladesh

Four workers in Indonesia and one worker in Bangladesh had become unwell with Covid-19 symptoms, although not all workers could afford a test to confirm diagnosis. Workers who had been ill with Covid-19 reported increased expenses including paying for tests and accommodation for self-isolation. The unionised worker in Bangladesh also worried that her illness could be used as a reason to terminate her employment.

>>Around a week ago, the security guard detected my fever with his thermometer gun. I was taken to the doctor and he prescribed some tests and medicine. I could not do the test because of the expense. Among many medicines, I could buy a strip of paracetamol. I could not go to the factory for almost six days. Although I got permission from the management, I am afraid that I might be sacked soon. The factory management was already very annoyed with me due to my involvement with the newly elected workers' union.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh



>>I got infected with mild symptoms and had to self-isolate in my small rental house in a crowded industrial urban area. Before I got infected, I stayed with my roommate. Fortunately, my roommate did not get infected. We had to stay separately after that. This meant that our rent costs doubled, since before it was divided by two. I also had to pay for all the rapid and PCR test (1 rapid, 2 PCR), which is very expensive for me. Management only called me regularly once a week to check on my condition, but not helping with the test cost or even with the medicine and vitamins. I had to pay for everything by myself.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

Thirteen workers spoke of difficulties in taking time off work, either as annual leave or sick leave. These workers were mainly based in Cambodia and Bangladesh. None of the workers in Bangladesh had been paid their annual leave allowance for 2020. Some workers highlighted that the lack of sick leave in the factories increased the risk of transmission, as workers have no choice but to work through their illness.

>>It is hard to take leave. I was referred to many different people just to approve my leave. However, I still got ignored, until I approached the trade union to intervene. When I resumed my work, they talked bad about me and pressured me through production targets.<<

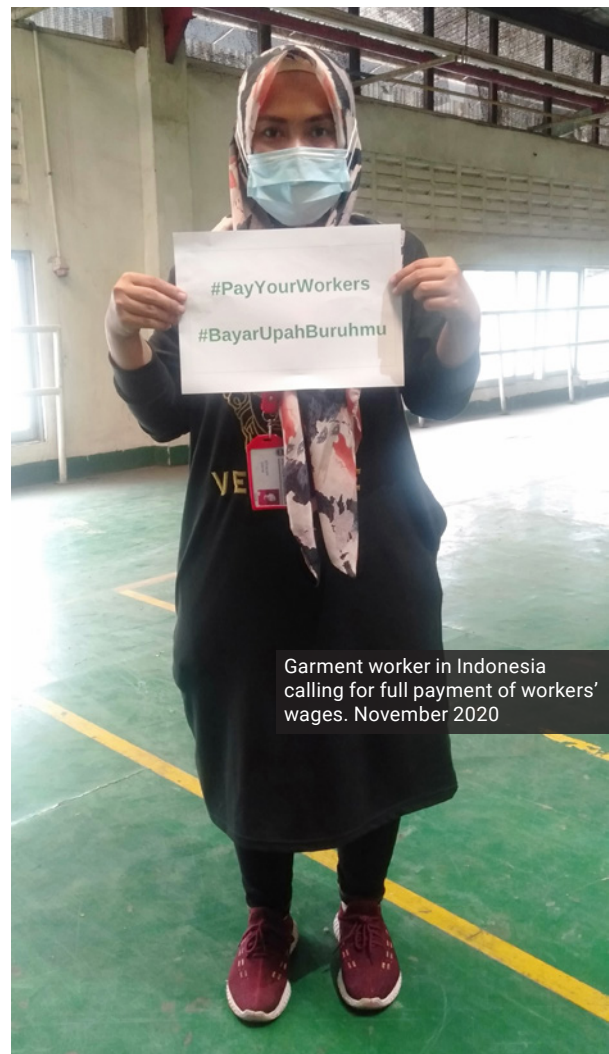
Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>The factory management does not grant leave at all. They do not even grant sick leave. A couple of days ago, one of our colleagues had a fever and he applied for sick leave. He was refused, and he was forced to come in; otherwise, he would be sacked. Luckily, his fever was gone within a few days but 10-15 of his colleagues also got fevers from him. Fortunately, all of them recovered very quickly. We thanked Allah that it was not Covid-19. If he was infected with Covid-19, all of us would be in great danger.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Primark in Bangladesh

>>[The factory] does not allow paid sick leave. In 2019, I suffered from typhoid and could not come to the factory for 8 days. At the end of the month, 8 days' pay was deducted from my salary. I recovered from typhoid naturally, but Covid-19 has changed the situation a lot. Most patients are not recovering without treatment.<<

Worker producing for Primark in Bangladesh



Garment worker in Indonesia calling for full payment of workers' wages. November 2020



WORKERS' EXPERIENCES OF HARDSHIP DURING COVID-19

A CULTURE OF FEAR: HARASSMENT, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, AND UNION BUSTING

Twenty workers highlighted harassment and bullying from factory supervisors and managers as a key issue that had been exacerbated throughout the pandemic. These workers were based in Cambodia and Bangladesh. This upward trend of harassment and bullying from factory supervisors indicates that factory management is emboldened to mistreat workers, safe in the knowledge that workers have little choice but to maintain their current employment, due to the current job scarcity.

>>I am threatened or get scolded when I cannot meet production targets set by the factory. Sometimes, my hands get injured because I work too much on the sewing machine.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>The factory management is very hostile to its workers. Last year, they sacked more than 500 workers in the name of order cancellations. However, most of the sacked workers were elderly like me and were involved with a workers' union.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>The factory management treats its workers like slaves. They always use dirty slang words and often harass them physically. I worked at [another factory] for eight years. I also faced abusive treatment there, but not like at Sharmin Apparels.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>The clothes you wear are expensive, but the wage we get is low. When we make mistakes or when we are unable to complete it on time or meet the production targets, we get scolded.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

Five of the workers in Bangladesh stated that women in particular were subjected to harassment and abuse in the workplace. One male worker who challenged this was beaten and fired by factory management.

>>Verbal and physical abuse were very common. I've noticed many instances of physical and sexual abuse of my female colleagues at the hands of their male supervisors.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>I noticed that workers, particularly female workers, are abused frequently in this factory. They are flogged by the male supervisors for making simple mistakes. Some supervisors have sexual relationships with the workers. Only those workers, who agree to get involved in such a relationship, are treated well. I worked in various factories before but never witnessed such a horrible working environment.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Primark in Bangladesh

>>One day I protested when a supervisor was touching a young female worker and she became extremely nervous and embarrassed.... I was summoned to the line manager's room during lunch break. When I entered the room, I was suddenly pushed by a security guard. I fell on the floor and I was flogged mercilessly by three or four guards. Then I learned that they found two factory-made shirts in my bag. I would bring a prayer mat and some snacks in that bag and put that bag in a corner. Probably, when I went to the washroom, one of those guards or supervisors put those shirts in my bag. In this way, they humiliated me and announced in the factory that I was caught red-handed while stealing shirts. The next day they informed me that I had been sacked and I would not back come to the factory.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh
Laid off in December 2020



During the pandemic, many factories have laid off significant proportions of their workforces, in response to cancelled orders and reduced demand from global brands. Many factories have used the mass terminations as an excuse to target unionised workers, eroding the structures that workers can use to demand workplace protections and improved pay and conditions. Eleven workers in Bangladesh highlighted extremely concerning cases of union busting, preventing them from organising with colleagues to challenge unpaid wages or poor working conditions during the pandemic.

>>I, with some of my colleagues, wanted to form a union. When the factory management learned about me, they summoned me and threatened me of "destroying my life". One day, I got a call from a local thug who said, if I try to organise workers, he would evict me from the locality (Fatulla, Narayanganj). They also threatened my colleagues and warned them not to form any union.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>We have been severely exploited in the name of pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic was not our fault, but it was us who were given less than half of our normal salary. At first we protested, but the factory management said, 'If you protest or form a union, you will not get a penny from us and you will not only lose your job, but also you will be evicted from this area and will never get a job in any other factory again.' So, none of us could form a union in this factory.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>I could not go to the factory for almost six days. Although I took permission from the management, I am afraid that I might be sacked soon. The factory management was already very annoyed with me due to my involvement with the newly elected workers' union. They did not forbid us to form the union officially but indirectly they warned us not to join the union. A couple of weeks ago my supervisor said to me: 'You people will go to hell because of your ingratitude. We are paying you, whereas you are harming the organisation by forming a union. You do nothing but incite new workers against us.'<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>There was no workers' union in the factory. The workers who tried to form a union were immediately sacked with humiliating allegations such as theft, drug addiction, etc.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Primark in Bangladesh

Several workers reported violent repression against union activity from factory management. Two of the workers even received death threats.

One union organiser shared his experience of violence and death threats, before he was eventually fired from the factory:

>>The factory management hired local thugs to beat me and to evict me from Ashulia. One day I received a phone call from an anonymous number who threatened to kill me if I go to the factory again. By the grace of Allah, nobody has harmed me physically yet.<<

>>I was told that due to cancellation of orders, the management had decided to close an entire section of the factory. So, we were fired that day. The Area General Manager, accompanied by his bodyguards, showed me from the window that the entire factory was surrounded by armed policemen who were ready to suppress any agitation. I was instructed to sign a paper where it was written that I was resigning from this factory willingly and had received all my dues. When I protested, a gunman of the manager threatened me that if I did not sign, I would be killed and my dead body would never leave the factory again.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh
Laid off in July 2020



After challenging sexual harassment of his female colleagues, another worker was framed by factory management for theft, beaten, and fired. He was then warned against reporting the incident to the union:

>>That supervisor also threatened me that if I get involved with any workers' union or NGO, he will kill me instantly. They were afraid that I might share those incidents with the garment workers' welfare federation or NGOs and cause trouble for them.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh
(Laid off in December, 2020)

A key theme across the data, is that workers are living and working under the fear that they may lose their jobs. Nineteen workers expressed a fear of becoming unemployed, and the highest number of reports was in Bangladesh (12). This fear has been exacerbated during the Covid-19 era, with instances of factory management using the pandemic to justify wage cuts and dismissals. Furthermore, workers claim that factory management have compelled workers to meet unreasonable production targets or undertake unpaid overtime, using job scarcity as a threat to ensure that workers comply. In many cases, this means that workers are less likely to speak out about poor working conditions or wage theft, leaving them powerless to fight for justice in their workplaces.

>>I am a single mother. I am worried the pandemic may lead to factory closure. If that happens, I don't have any money to pay my debt or to pay my living costs.<<

Worker producing for H&M and Nike in Cambodia

>>Mostly, when we can't meet production targets, the factory will say they don't feed lazy workers and we can leave if we want.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Cambodia

>>We constantly get threats of getting fired if we fail to meet the production goal. We work under immense psychological and physical strain, however compared to the hardship we go through, our salary is very low.<<

Worker producing for Primark and H&M in Bangladesh

*>>The factory supervisors always abuse us. They know we will not get a job anywhere in this pandemic... I have been hearing rumours that, due to reduced orders, the factory may sack a group of workers again. So, I am worried about my job. Last year in November, the factory had sacked a group of workers due to cancelled orders. I survived luckily at that time. Most of the factories recruit hundreds of workers when they get orders. And, when they do not get orders or cannot make much profit, they start to sack workers **en masse**. There are no rules for them and there is no job security for us. I have not started any union related activities here because, if I lose my job now, I will not get any job during this pandemic.<<*

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>My elderly parents and siblings are totally dependent on my income. If I lose my job due to fever, my family will be destitute.<<

Worker producing for H&M in Bangladesh

>>The company also proposed voluntary resignation; they said Nike is reducing their orders.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia

>>Some of our workers have been forced to take voluntary resignation even though they already worked during pandemic and risked their own health.<<

Worker producing for Nike in Indonesia



Activists of CCAWU union in Cambodia call upon brands to take responsibility for the workers in their supply chains during the pandemic. March 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the pre-existing problems endemic in the garment industry, pushing garment workers even further into crisis. The data presented in this report shows that workers are trapped by a toxic combination of decreasing wages, increasing production targets, and a rise in living costs. The data also shows a trend of mass-layoffs, meaning that remaining workers need to fulfil higher production targets to mitigate the impact to production.

In addition to ruthlessly low wages, workers are living in fear for their health, their safety and their livelihoods. The threat of Covid-19 infection is of clear concern to workers, who have little choice but to continue working in densely populated factories, often with an absence of social distancing, employer-provided face masks, and hygiene facilities. It is also clear that workers are worried that unreliable access to sick pay could mean that they, or their colleagues, are forced to continue working in the factories if they become unwell with Covid-19.

The ongoing struggle for labour rights is under attack. This is shown particularly in the interviews from Bangladesh highlighting violent union-busting tactics, but also in the testimony of the many workers who have been harassed by factory management and threatened with job loss.

For decades, the garment industry has hoarded profits and wealth at the top of its supply chains, forcing suppliers to operate on skeletal costs. The result of this is that many suppliers have not had a buffer to absorb the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For garment workers, decades of poverty pay that barely covers basic living costs means that the wage theft detailed in this report is pushing them beyond their breaking point.

The findings in this report should be of concern to Nike, Primark, and H&M – as well as other garment brands and retailers. Although we have only researched 14 factories, there is a growing body of evidence that the problems highlighted in this report are rampant across the supply chains of every major fashion brand.³⁰

Despite assurances from global brands, workers are clearly not receiving their full wages throughout the pandemic, and there is a trend across the data of workers taking home less pay than they were prior to 2020. Voluntary initiatives such as Primark's wage fund have failed to reach the workers in their supply chain, and brands must take greater action to ensure that the workers in their supply chains are paid properly throughout the pandemic.



DEMANDS FOR BRANDS

In light of this research, we renew our demands for Nike, Primark, and H&M – and all other garment brands – to take action on the following steps.³¹

1. All apparel, textile, footwear, and logistics workers, who were employed at the onset of the crisis, regardless of employment status, should be paid their legally mandated wages and benefits, including severance payments and arrears, for the duration of the pandemic;
2. Brands, retailers, e-tailers and employers should negotiate directly with unions in the sector on an enforceable agreement on wage assurance, severance guarantee fund, and basic labour rights to fill the pandemic-era wage gap, ensure workers who are terminated receive their full severance, support stronger social protections for all workers, and to ensure basic labour rights are respected;
3. As part of this agreement brands, retailers and e-tailers, having profited from exploitative labour practices for decades, should commit to a price premium on future orders;
4. Brands, retailers, and e-tailers must ensure that specific Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) plans are implemented and monitored, ensuring the right to paid sick leave if the workers or their dependents become symptomatic, and a policy by the employer to allow the closure of the premises if workers become infected with Covid-19;
5. Brands, retailers, and e-tailers must change the current pricing model and underlying business model. These changes include order stability that allows for proper planning, timely payments of orders, and full respect for workers' rights. It also includes a costing model that covers all the costs of social compliance: ranging from living wages and benefits, to social protection and worker safety.

Appendix 1: List of factories supplying for each brand.³²

Factory	Primark	Nike	H&M	Other brands
Abanti Colour Tex OAR ID: BD2019241256YMR Bangladesh			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mango (OAR, 2020) Matalan Supplier List (2021) Next Supplier List (2021) Tom Tailor (OAR, 2020)
Ananta Denim Technology Ltd OAR ID: BD2020330C9X44A Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primark Supplier List (2020)³³ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported by interviewees Other Ananta factories listed on H&M Supplier List (2021)³⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bestseller Supplier List (2020) GAP Supplier List (2020) Kontoor (2021) Levi Strauss Supplier List (2020) Varner (Wikirate 2020)
Apple Apparel (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. OAR ID: KH2019086K39CZQ Cambodia			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2020) 	
Berry Apparel (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. OAR ID: KH2019086VJQKEJ Cambodia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported by interviewees Nike's Supplier List (2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2020) 	
Chea Sinat Garment Co., Ltd. OAR ID: not found Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primark Supplier List 2020 			
Eagle Nice Indonesia OAR ID: ID2019085XXZD9N Indonesia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nike's Supplier List 2020 		
Fashion Forum Ltd OAR ID: BD2019248XH8RK1 Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primark Supplier List 2020 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Clothing by Asda Supplier List (2021) Marks & Spencer Supplier List (2020) Next Supplier List (2021)
Fountain Garments Manufacturing Ltd OAR ID: BD2019083T3EFVJ Bangladesh			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kontoor Supplier List (2020)
Nikomas Gemilang OAR ID: ID2019085WD59ZW Indonesia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nike's Supplier List (2020) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adidas Supplier List (2021)
Roo Hsing Garment Co., Ltd. OAR ID: KH20190876XR7G0 Cambodia			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levi Strauss & Co. (2020)
Sharmin Apparels OAR ID: BD2019248MQTGPB Bangladesh			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2021) 	
Victory Chingluh Indonesia OAR ID: ID2019085CZZ9NE Indonesia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nike Supplier List (2020) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adidas (shipment records 2021)³⁵
Windy Apparels Ltd OAR ID: BD2019083MVR2X3 Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported by interviewees³⁶ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2021)³⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next Supplier List (2021) Tesco Supplier List (2020)
Yunusco Group OAR ID: BD2020079MVYJ81 Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primark Supplier List (2020) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&M Supplier List (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit of the Loom Supplier List (2021) Marks & Spencer Supplier List (2020)

ENDNOTES

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- (32) The supplier lists cited in this table are on file with the authors.
- (33) Primark's current supplier list includes Ananta Huaxiang Ltd. It is possible that Ananta Denim Technology took subcontracted Primark orders from another Ananta Group factory. Primark's January 2020 supplier list included Ananta Denim Technology; this list as well as many other supplier lists cited in this table are on file with the authors.
- (34) H&M claim that they have a business relationship with Ananta Casual Wear Ltd. as a supplier, but have not sourced from their factory "Ananta Denim Technology Ltd" since October 2017. Workers say differently, and it is very well possible that Ananta Denim Technology took subcontracted H&M orders from another Ananta Group factory as H&M's current supplier list includes several Ananta Group factories.
- (35) Shipment records (on file with the author) show that the factory was producing Adidas products for at least one Adidas supplier.
- (36) Primark's current supplier list includes Union Sportswear Ltd (part of Windy Group). It is possible that Windy Apparels took subcontracted Primark orders placed at Union Sportswear. U.S. import records show more than a dozen shipments of Primark products shipped by Windy Apparels Ltd in the first several months of 2021.
- (37) H&M have claimed that whilst they have an active business relationship with Windy Apparels Ltd in Bangladesh as a supplier, they have not sourced from their factory "Windy Apparels Ltd." since the end of 2019. H&M however continues to mention the factory on its supplier list and actively source from the factory group.

BREAKING POINT

WAGE THEFT, VIOLENCE AND EXCESSIVE WORKLOADS ARE PUSHING GARMENT WORKERS TO BREAKING POINT DURING THE PANDEMIC

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IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY

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