

As apparel and footwear brands who source our labels and hangtags from Avery Dennison, we are committed to fairness for workers in all countries from which we source. We are writing to express our support for Avery Dennison India Pvt. Ltd. workers' rights in Bangalore, India. As per our Codes of Conduct requirements for our suppliers, the workers hired by our suppliers must have the right to freedom of association without fear of retribution, and our suppliers must act legally in regards to dealing with any of their workers or worker representatives.

It has come to our attention that a group of 52 workers have been dismissed illegally due to their decision to join a union. Their unionization efforts, protected under our Code of Conduct for suppliers from which we source, were in response to the fact that they have been doing the work of permanent workers for several years despite being hired as contractors with fewer access to the benefits permanent employees enjoy. It is clear that the work these contract workers were performing were perennial in nature and central to the functioning of the company, therefore not to be classified as contract or temporary work. Under Indian law, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 Section 10 (2) identifies "whether the process, operation, or work is....necessary for the.....manufacture....that is carried on in the establishment [,]" "whether it is of perennial nature [,]" and "whether it is done ordinarily through regular workmen" as factors indicating that contract arrangement should not be used to employ workers in a given facility. The use of contract labor for permanent work also violates the directive that was issued by the Labour Department of Karnataka on 30 December 2017.

We have been disappointed to hear that although the matter has been referred to a labor court, the process has been drawn out in the pre-court proceedings, with reports of the lawyer retained by Avery Dennison refusing to negotiate and giving the impression that he is attempting to bring the matter to court even when there is the opportunity to settle the case beforehand. We have also found disturbing the reports of efforts to break up the workers' union on the part of Avery Dennison India Pvt. Ltd. management. The Avery Dennison India Pvt. Ltd. opened up a limited number of permanent positions for which the contract workers may apply, however, this was only after the contract workers attempted to form a union. The piecemeal absorption of contract workers into permanent employment by Avery Dennison, instead of making permanent all contract workers engaged in perennial work is in our opinion an attempt to pressure the contract workers to disengage from the union supporting their struggle. This directly violates the ILO convention number 87 (Freedom of Association).

We are forced to join together with our colleagues to call on Avery Dennison to respect the Codes of Conduct we have all adopted for our suppliers, as well as all Indian and international laws. We urge Avery Dennison Pvt. Ltd to rehire the illegally dismissed workers and make permanent all contract workers who have been working since at least January 2017.

We look forward to this matter being resolved in a timely manner.

Signed,
