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PRESS RELEASE

Second Anniversary of Fire Disaster in Pakistan Textile Factory

KiK stalling on further compensation: Victims prepare to launch lawsuit in Germany

Berlin, 10 September 2014 – Immediate aid: check; long term compensation: still outstanding – that’s the status of negotiations between KiK and survivors and surviving dependants of the fire in the Ali Enterprises textile factory in Pakistan two years ago. 254 people died and 55 were injured in the catastrophe on 11 September 2012. German textile discounter KiK, the factory’s biggest client, made an immediate relief payment following the fire but has been stalling during negotiations on long term compensation.

In light of considerable public pressure, KiK entered into a contractual agreement in December 2012 undertaking, among other things, to take part in negotiations on long term compensation. These payments would aim to compensate for instance for the permanent loss of earnings of a family’s main provider. “KiK has been dragging its feet on these negotiations for almost a year,” says Frauke Banse from the Clean Clothes Campaign who is taking part in the negotiations. “If this persists, legal steps will have to be taken to ensure compliance with the agreement.”

The case is not just about the money. “The victims are looking for justice. They want KiK to finally acknowledge responsibility for its overseas supply operations,” says Miriam Saage-Maaß from the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR). “Should the negotiations break down again, they are prepared to take legal action against KiK in a German court.” ECCHR and the Frankfurt-based relief organization medico international are supporting six families through the legal proceedings surrounding the incident and in the preparation of a lawsuit in Germany. Last week they were in Pakistan to meet with those affected, who have formed the Baldia Factory Fire Affectees Association. “KiK will only meet its obligations if the public pressure in Germany is sustained,” says Thomas Seibert, South Asia Coordinator at medico international.

To mark the second anniversary of the fire, the heads of DGB, ver.di and IG Metall have launched a petition named “*Wir stehen am Anfang*” (We are just beginning). In Berlin, a vigil will be held today at 5pm outside the KiK store in Neukölln (Hermannstraße 214) in remembrance of the deceased. Memorials will also be held in Cologne, Amsterdam and Karachi.

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