

Better Work Jordan Newsletter



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BETTER WORK
Jordan



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Collective Bargaining Agreement Signed for Jordanian Garment Industry

A sector-wide agreement between employers' associations and the garment union signed in Jordan

AMMAN (ILO News) - A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between two apparel employers' associations and Jordan's garment union was signed in May, in an unprecedented step to strengthen their partnership, promote social dialogue and improve the working conditions of some 55,000 workers in the sector, of whom 40,000 work in factories producing for export markets.

Through their joint efforts, the parties involved have negotiated a CBA, which is considered to be one of the more comprehensive of its type in the garment sector anywhere in the world.

The agreement was signed between the Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE), The Association of Owners of Factories, Workshops and Garments (AOFWG) and the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment & Clothing Industries, in a ceremony attended by Prof. Nidal Katamine, Jordan's Minister of Labour and Transport. (Continued on page 2)



“It is the first time in Jordan that this sort of agreement is signed.”

Collective Bargaining Agreement Signed for Jordanian Garment Industry

(Continued from page 1) “It is the first time in Jordan that this sort of agreement is signed. It provides steps for the regulation of the relationship between workers and their employers in accordance with Jordan’s laws,” said Fathallah Omrani, President of the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment and Clothing Industries.

Discussion on the drafting of the CBA began following disputes between workers and their employers in the apparel industry over wages, working conditions and dormitory standards.

“It’s a very important agreement for the sector, and it reflects the understanding between the employers and workers. This understanding serves the national good and the national economy,” said Mohammad Khourma, chairman of the Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textile Exporters’ Association (JGATE).

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) promoted the bargaining process by providing collective bargaining training to both the garment union and employers prior to the negotiations. Plans are now underway to provide follow-up training to both parties regarding the administration of the agreement.

“For a first contract, it is quite comprehensive with provisions on union recognition and access to workers, dues check-off, dormitory standards, dispute settlement, employer rights, and annual seniority bonuses.” said BWJ Programme Manager Phillip Fishman.

Jordan Moves to Improve Conditions in Worker Dormitories

New legislation paves the way for improving conditions in worker dormitories

Following a six month consultative process between government, employers and workers’ representatives, Jordan enacted legal regulations to improve conditions in worker dormitories this June.

In the past the lack of a unified, legally enforced dormitory standard has resulted in shortcomings in many garment worker dormitories in areas such as ventilation, bathroom facilities and protection against heat, cold and dampness. The lack of fire protection measures in worker dormitories has also been raised as cause for concern. Although the Jordanian garment industry has a good record in dealing with fire safety risks, the risk of fire in these dormitories is significantly greater than that in the factories themselves.

According to the Programme Manager of BWJ, Phillip Fishman, “These legal standards not only provide guidance to employers and building owners to improve fire safety but also allow the Government of Jordan to regularly inspect dormitories to ensure that these standards are met.” The Jordanian government has given factories a two month grace period to implement the improvements required by these regulations.

Garment Workers' Center Nears Completion

Garment workers in Jordan's Al-Hassan Industrial Zone will soon have a safe and accessible space for recreation and targeted programming to increase the quality of their daily lives

After several months of construction, a workers' center being built in the Al-Hassan Industrial Zone is nearing completion and is planned to open in September of this year.

A local management committee has been formed to oversee the operation of the center, composed of representatives of workers, employers and the government.

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) is coordinating the establishment of the first workers' center with support from USAID, the Al-Hassan QIZ Authority, apparel factories in the industrial zone, the garment workers union, and international brands.

The center will provide workers with low-cost or free access to recreational facilities, training, legal services, and mental health and psychosocial services.

In preparation for the opening, BWJ has produced fliers to provide workers with information on the services to be provided in the center.



Under construction: workers' center in Al-Hassan Industrial Zone



Excerpts from promotional fliers to be distributed to workers



“When I first arrived, my salary was very low and we had to work long hours. Now things are much better.”

Major New Initiative to Protect Women Garment Workers from Human Trafficking

Over 100,000 girls and women in South Asia are set to benefit from a new initiative by the International Labour Organization and the UK Department for International Development, which aims to prevent trafficking within the region and to the Middle East

The Work In Freedom programme, funded by UK aid, will focus on trafficking through known labour trafficking routes from Bangladesh, India and Nepal, to Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and India. It will deal with trafficking in two sectors, domestic labour and the garment industry, with Better Work Jordan (BWJ) participating as an active partner in issues related to the garment industry.

The video featured below about the Work In Freedom programme relates the experience of Nasima, a 28 year old Bangladeshi migrant worker who has been working in Jordan’s garment industry for nine years. Finding a stable and regulated job in the industry has enabled her to secure a decent livelihood.

“When I first moved here, I did not have any money or any savings but now I have money. I used to have economic problems which I have now solved” Nasima said in an interview with BWJ staff. “In Bangladesh if you do not have money people do not respect you and you have no value. Now that I have money I feel that I have a value among my family and others.”

Nasima adds “When I first arrived, my salary was very low and we had to work long hours. Now things are much better.”

[Click to watch the *Work in Freedom* video](#)

Better Work Jordan Welcomes Bangladeshi Enterprise Advisors to its Team

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) has welcomed to its team two new enterprise advisors from Bangladesh. This will allow BWJ to better communicate with Bangladeshi workers, who currently comprise around 30 per cent of workers in Jordan’s export-oriented garment industry.

Shirin Akhter comes to BWJ with eighteen years of experience in social auditing of garment factories, including eleven years with the International Labour Organization in Bangladesh.

Quazi Sabetul Islam also comes from a social auditing background, with three years of experience in this field. He is currently completing a masters’ degree in textile and apparel marketing and merchandizing.

Better Work Jordan Publishes Guide to Labour Law

Better Work Jordan and Ministry of Labour produce legal guide for garment industry stakeholders

Amman (ILO News) – Better Work Jordan, in cooperation with the Jordanian government, has published a legal guide that outlines the rights and obligations of stakeholders involved in Jordan’s burgeoning garment manufacturing sector, including workers and employers.

The “Labour Law Guide for the Garment Industry” outlines basic Jordanian labour law in non-technical language. Available in Arabic and English, the document covers areas relating to child labour, trade unions, collective bargaining contracts, labour disputes, discrimination, forced labour, contracts and human resources, wages and benefits, occupational safety and health, working hours and rest periods.

“Better Work Jordan has produced this guide with the aim of helping employers, workers, international buyers, and other stakeholders to better understand the obligations and rights stipulated under Jordanian law. The guide integrates the major sources of Jordanian labour law into one easy-to-use booklet,” said Phillip Fishman, Programme Manager for Better Work Jordan.

Various articles, provisions, legal documents and legal instructions that have been produced since 1996 relating to Jordan’s garment industry have been consolidated into the document to assist non-legal experts in understanding their entitlements and responsibilities.

“We hope this guide will effectively promote social compliance, harmonious labour relations, and a friendly working environment, to the benefit of enterprises and society,” said Prof. Nidal Katamine, Minister of Labour and Transport.

The Guide to the Jordanian Labour Law for the Garment Industry is available in [English](#) and [Arabic](#) on the BWJ website.

Better Work Jordan Awareness Campaign on Safety and Health at Work

To mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) has produced a range of awareness raising materials for garment workers on occupational health and safety issues and hosted a meeting of key stakeholders to discuss what action needs to be taken to reduce health and safety risks in factories and dormitories.

As part of this campaign, BWJ distributed around three thousand posters, mugs, towels and bags presenting key messages about health and safety issues to garment workers in factories across Jordan. The need to improve safety in the garment industry globally was highlighted in November of 2012, when a devastating fire at a garment factory in Dhaka (Bangladesh) killed at least 117 and injured 200 others. Although the Jordanian garment industry has not suffered from any such major incidents, stakeholders recognize that there is room for improvement.



A poster from the awareness campaign

BWJ’s most recent assessments of garment factory conditions have found that the most widespread safety issue is failure to clearly mark emergency exits and ensure easy access to them. Moreover, almost 60 per cent of garment factories in Jordan fail to provide workers with protective eye equipment.

The constitution of the International Labour Organization enshrines the principle that workers should be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. But this has yet to become a reality for millions of workers around the world. An estimated 337 million workplace accidents and 2.3 million deaths occur every year, with some 6,300 deaths per day, according to ILO data.

Spreading the Message on Sexual Harassment in Jordan's Garment Factories

SAHAB, Jordan (ILO News) – For a long time, Indrani, a Sri Lankan woman who works in a Jordanian garment factory, believed there was only one type of sexual offense that could occur in her workplace:

being victims of sexual harassment,” Shanti explains.

Two years ago, allegations were made of widespread rape being committed against workers at one

relating to sexual harassment in the workplace.

“We are foreigners in Jordan, so we do not know much about the laws, rules and procedures,” she said. “After the training, I now have a better idea of how to deal with the situation if something happens.”

Shanti notes that while some relevant laws exist, the most powerful and effective policies are those created and adopted internally by the factories, which address all forms of sexual harassment.

“Part of the training is to help the factories create their own policy on sexual harassment prevention. We share our model policy, which they can adapt,” she explains. “This has had a great impact on the factory’s management, as it has given them a great sense of responsibility where they now feel that they are in charge of the situation and can take control.”



“After the training, I now have a better idea of how to deal with the situation if something happens.”

rape. It wasn’t until she attended a training course run by Better Work Jordan (BWJ) that she learned about sexual harassment.

“I always thought that when women spoke about being sexually harassed, they meant they were raped. Now I understand that sexual harassment can take place in many different forms,” she says.

BWJ Training Specialist, Rania Shanti, has been visiting a garment factory in the industrial city of Sahab, Jordan, where she talks to small groups of workers about sexual harassment. She tries to create a comfortable and – crucially – confidential atmosphere that will encourage participants to speak freely.

Like Indrani, many of the workers at the factory are foreigners – mainly from Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. So, Shanti often has to communicate through a translator.

“It’s difficult to assess sexual harassment in these factories due to the sensitive nature of the issue and fears of reprisals among workers. It’s never guaranteed that the workers will label themselves as

of Jordan’s largest clothing factories. Although the allegations were not substantiated, reports of unwanted sexual advances towards workers are common across the global garment manufacturing sector.

BWJ’s own investigation found that many workers had very little understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment – even though they were concerned about it. As a result, the programme launched a pilot sexual harassment prevention awareness project with Indrani’s employer, the Jerash Garment and Fashion Manufacturing Company, which aims to teach line workers, managers and supervisors about how to identify, prevent and report instances of sexual harassment.

During one session held in mid-June, Indrani joined a group of shy and soft-spoken women, who told fellow workers about being groped, having their skirts lifted and even being sexually assaulted by taxi drivers.

Priyadorshani, another Sri Lankan worker at the factory, said the project helped them better understand Jordanian laws and regulations



Rania Shanti

Sanil Kumar, the company’s compliance officer, agrees. “The training helped the managers and supervisors on issues which they were not aware of before, such as certain forms of sexual harassment and how to prevent it or deal with it. And following advice from the Better Work team, we have developed our own internal sexual harassment prevention policy for the factory which has been adopted by the management.”

Unions are also trying to play a role says Mervat Abdel Kareem al-Jamhawi (Continued on page 7)

Spreading the Message on Sexual Harassment in Jordan's Garment Factories

(Continued from page 6) of the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment and Clothing. "We try to raise awareness of the issues among female workers in factories but there are many challenges, such as cultural and language barriers. It is definitely a high priority for us and we need more support from projects like Better Work Jordan to conduct more programmes in a range of factories."

BWJ plans to help create independent counseling and referral systems for workers who feel sexually harassed or under threat. The pilot project will also extend to several other factories next year – some of which employ up to 7,000 workers from as many as eight countries. "We will continue with our training," says Shanti. "We will continue to spread our message, especially to migrant workers, by telling them that they are not victims, they are not weak. They have come from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and other parts of the world to work here, so they must be strong women," she said. "They need to know that there are actions that can be taken. If they don't want to talk to their managers about sexual harassment, they can talk to us."

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Prestige Apparel Manufacturing Ltd.

Primex Apparel

Qadri Group

Rainbow Textile

Rich Door Textile Factory.

Rich Pine International Group Ltd.

Sana Factory

Standard Textile Jordan

Sterling Apparel Manufacturing

Sterling Apparel Manufacturing (Satellite Unit)

Straight Line

The Sun Jordan Textiles Co. Ltd.

Third Dimension Apparel L.L.C.

Trans World Apparel Mfg. Co. Ltd

Tusker Apparel Ltd. Co.

United Creations L.L.C.

Vega Textile Ltd.

W&D Apparel (Jordan) Corp.

UPCOMING PUBLIC TRAINING

Better Work Jordan offers a range of targeted training programs to managers, supervisors and workers, both in the classroom and at the factory. Our trainings focus on improving compliance with labour standards, productivity and quality through building effective workplace cooperation. For more information, please contact our offices.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT

About the course:	This course helps participants understand that OSHM should be an integral part of factory management. The training gives guidance on how to improve safety and health within factories to meet both national and international standards. Participants will engage in a series of practical activities that will not only benefit safety and health within the enterprise, but also offer low-cost suggestions for improving working conditions and increasing productivity.
Target participants:	Factory management, OSH committee members and trade union/worker representatives
Duration:	2 days
Cost per participant:	80 JDs

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

About the course:	This course is designed to help factories overcome non-compliance in human resources and bridge the gap between BWJ standards and current practices in garment sectors. The training programme covers: Human Resources roles, workplace cooperation, compliance with national labour legislation and personnel administration. Factories are guided to create concrete action plans, and encouraged to implement them. BWJ Enterprise Advisors monitor factories' progress through regular visits.
Target participants:	Human resource managers, Human Resource Officers, Compliance Officers
Duration:	4 days
Cost per participant:	160 JDs

ADVANCED HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

About the course:	This course provides participants with in-depth training on the following human resource management topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conflict resolution and industrial relations » Performance appraisal » Continuous improvement » Training/capacity building of employees » Competency mapping and job descriptions » Succession planning » Compensation and benefits
Target participants:	Human resource managers, Human Resource Officers, Compliance Officers
Duration:	5 days
Cost per participant:	200 JDs

SUPERVISORY SKILLS TRAINING

About the course:	This course enables participants to gain valuable leadership and management skills to further enhance dialogue between the company and its employees. The content of the course will cover the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » How to be a professional supervisor » Building good relationships » Influencing skills » Managing people » Videotaped practice
Target participants:	Factory supervisors and managers
Cost per participant:	120 JDs
Duration:	4 days, split into 2 x 2 day courses

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For more information about Better Work Jordan, visit www.betterwork.org/jordan or contact us at jordan@betterwork.