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[Home](#) > Press Release: 75,000 Shoppers To JC Penney: Don't Break Promises To Families Of Workers Burned Alive In Factory Fire

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WASHINGTON, DC – More than 75,000 consumers have joined a campaign on Change.org calling on JC Penney to follow through on promises to fairly compensate the families of 30 workers killed in a factory fire in Bangladesh and implement stronger fire safety standards in their factories.

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), an organization which advocates for basic safety standards for workers around the world, launched the campaign on Change.org after JC Penney walked away from compensation negotiations for the families of victims killed in a fire at the That's It Sportswear factory in Bangladesh last December. Along with several of the other companies who made clothing at the factory, JC Penney had agreed to fairly compensate victims' families and improve safety standards in their supplier factories to prevent future fires.

"All we're asking is that JC Penney keep the promises they made to the wives, husbands, and children of the 30 people killed at one of their supplier factories," said Judy Gearhart of the International Labor Rights Forum. "While the other brands who have made commitments to support these families continue to work with us in good faith, JC Penney has sadly walked away from the table. They need to honor their commitment to these families who have already lost so much and to take preventative action to ensure that no more workers who sew JC Penney clothing are killed in factory fires."

When a preventable fire broke out at the That's It Sportswear factory in Bangladesh last December -- in part because exits were blocked to control workers' movements -- the ILRF launched a campaign on Change.org asking the brands which made clothing at the factory to offer fair compensation to the victims' families. After receiving letters from more than 65,000 customers, several companies including GAP Inc, Abercrombie and Fitch, and JC Penney agreed. Now, the International Labor Rights Forum reports that while most of the companies are working out a compensation strategy, JC Penney has refused to continue negotiations.

"This past December, we saw tens of thousands of consumers support the International Labor Rights Forum's campaign on Change.org, which resulted in concrete commitments made to the families of those killed in this terrible tragedy," said Change.org's Director of Organizing Amanda Kloer. "Now, more than 75,000 consumers have spoken again. Change.org empowers people to take action on the issues that matter to them, and it has been incredible to watch these campaigns grow and flourish."

In response to the campaign, JC Penney released a statement saying they have been "a leading force for change in creating safer working conditions and emergency evacuation procedures for Bangladeshi workers" and "are working aggressively to support a joint effort by the Bangladesh apparel industry and government to implement improved fire safety standards to prevent future catastrophes."

But the International Labor Rights Forum says that it has not seen any evidence of such efforts, and continues to call for JC Penney to provide just compensation to the victims and their families and launch thorough, independent, well funded and publicly transparent safety inspections of all multi-story supplier factories in its supply chain in Bangladesh.

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