



12th September 2016

Press Release

BLAST demands justice, and adequate compensation for Worker Deaths and Injuries in Tampaco Foils Fire

BLAST expresses its solidarity with the families of the 33 workers who have died following the fire at the Tampaco Foils factory, Tongi . We demand justice through prompt and effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible, and adequate compensation for the victims and amendment to the law.

According to news reports, at least 33 workers have been killed and many others injured since flames tore through a packaging factory, Tampaco Limited, in the BSCIC industrial area of Tongi, near Dhaka, on 10 September, minutes before the workers were about to change shifts.

Such an incident occurring after the Rana Plaza and Tazreen disasters is unexpected and unwarranted. The lessons learned should have been applied beyond the RMG sector to ensure measures for the safety of workers in all industries. It is urgent that those responsible for making and applying the law ensure standards of compensation for workplace deaths and injuries be revised to increase the statutory minimum of Taka one lakh and 1.25 lakhs which are woefully inadequate.

Since the collapse of Rana Plaza building in 2013, the government and international bodies have given significant attention to improving conditions in the export RMG sector. The fire at Tampaco points to the need to give similar attention to other factories in Bangladesh outside of the RMG sector, where workers face similar hazards of fire, electrical failures and building collapses.

BLAST' pointed to the need to a reform of the compensation system so that injured workers and dependent families received the same level of compensation as those affected by the Rana Plaza disaster:

“The current levels of compensation set out in the Bangladesh Labour Act are far too small to properly compensate workers and their families. The principles that resulted in much more favorable levels of compensation to those affected by the Rana Plaza disasters should become part of the our law and practice. Not making these changes for workers in industries other than RMG will result in clear discrimination’

For further information please contact:

Ms Mahbuba Akhter

Deputy Director (Advocacy and Communication),

Mobile: 01776060113

Email: mahbuba@blast.org.bd