

# Bangladesh: Situation deteriorating as government cracks down on labour

## *9 trade union leaders were arrested over the weekend in Chittagong*

Trade union offices ransacked and vandalised, leaders arrested and imprisoned, workers and organizers in hiding for fear of retribution – this is the face of Bangladesh’s punitive crackdown on labour. The situation is deteriorating further – 9 trade union members were arrested over the weekend in Chittagong. They have since been released, but the charges have not been dropped.

UNI and IndustriALL, along with the international labour movement, joined together to condemn the suppression of organized labour in Bangladesh. Since December, over 35 trade unionist leaders, organisers and workers have been arrested and detained for taking part in protests.

“We are fighting back to gain the release of the jailed workers and insist that basic trade union rights in Bangladesh,” said Philip Jennings, general secretary of UNI Global Union. “The government is acting unfairly and arrogantly. This repression is ultimately damaging to their number one export earner.”

IndustriALL’s general secretary, Valter Sanches, said:

“We demand the government stops this shameful repression of trade unionists in Bangladesh. The government must drop the charges and release all those that are still detained. By continuously flouting international laws on trade union and worker rights, it is seriously risking its most precious asset – the garment industry.”

UNI are coordinating a campaign under **#EveryDayCounts** together with IndustriALL and ITUC to defend trade unionists and end the repression of trade unions in Bangladesh.

### Note

IndustriALL and UNI have been at the forefront of improving worker rights and safety in the garment industry in Bangladesh, following the 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse, which killed more than 1,100 garment workers. They were the drivers of the Bangladesh Accord, a legally-binding agreement signed by more than 200 global brands, to inspect 1,600 garment factories for fire and safety hazards. More than 74% of identified safety issues in the 1,600 factories have been reported and verified as fixed.