



April 23, 2014

Press Release

## **One Year After the Rana Plaza collapse:**

### **Odhikar's statement**

April 24, 2014 is the one year anniversary of a collapse of Rana Plaza. The nine-storied Rana Plaza collapsed in Savar, Dhaka, injuring or taking away the lives of many people. During the incident, around five thousand workers were working in the five garments factories situated in the building. After the collapse, rescuers retrieved 1135 dead bodies and 2438 workers were pulled out from the rubble, some having to lose arms or legs.

*Odhikar* reported on the incident as well, and the organisation sends its heartfelt condolences to all the family members of the workers who died demands that they and the workers, who can no longer earn a living, be adequately compensated. The readymade garments sector is the main foreign currency earner of Bangladesh's economy. Workers connected with this sector are playing a vital role in the economy. Because of the gross negligence and carelessness of some vested interest groups, and the irresponsibility of concerned government agencies, workers are repeatedly facing these kinds of disasters. The January 2013 fire at Ashulia in Smart Garments and the November 2012 fire at Tazrin Fashions are other examples. In the case of Rana Plaza, 12 cases have been filed. Among them the trial of 11 cases are in the Labour Court and two of them are still under investigation by CID<sup>1</sup>. Victim families doubt whether they will get justice. The Government formed a special unit of the police force, named Industrial Police to control workers' demonstrations and protests. It has been alleged that Industrial Police are working to serve the interests of the factory owners and government has not taken any steps to ensure the interests of the workers. *Odhikar* demands to the government to bring the perpetrators before justice and publish a complete list of the dead and injured workers of Rana Plaza; it also urges the government to focus on adequate compensation to the victim families and rehabilitation of the injured workers. *Odhikar* realizes the urgent necessary to investigate all the past readymade garments factory disasters, along with the Rana Plaza incident. Unless the perpetrators are brought before justice, the culture of impunity for the owners of both factories and buildings will bring on another disaster.

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<sup>1</sup> Criminal Investigation Department of the police force.