



15 October 2025

Statement from Odhikar

Call for Investigation into Rupnagar Factory Fire, Accountability of Those Responsible, and Full Compensation for the Victims

Dhaka, 15 October 2025: Odhikar calls upon the Government to initiate an independent and impartial investigation into the devastating fire at the chemical warehouse and garment factory in Rupnagar. The findings of this investigation must be made public without delay. Odhikar further calls for all individuals and entities found responsible to be brought to justice.

On 14 October 2025, a catastrophic fire engulfed a three-storey building housing the ready-made garment factory named Anowara Fashion and a tin-shed chemical warehouse in the Shialbari area of Mirpur, Dhaka. Reportedly, at least 16 workers lost their lives and 10 others sustained injuries. Numerous other workers, including child labourers, remain unaccounted for.

Neither the building nor the adjacent chemical warehouse had a fire safety license, and no fire extinguishing systems were in place. Disturbingly, during the fire, the rooftop exit gate of the building was reportedly locked, preventing workers from escaping and leaving many trapped inside.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has confirmed that the garment factory involved in the incident was not registered with the association.

Although there are legal and policy frameworks in place, designed to prevent such tragedies, persistent irregularities in factory construction, coupled with widespread corruption and administrative failures within government inspection agencies, have allowed safety risks to escalate to alarming levels.

This incident brings to light a series of similar tragedies that have occurred in recent years: the fire at Tazreen Fashions in 2012, Smart Garments in 2013, Tampaco Foils in 2016, the chemical warehouse in Old Dhaka in 2019, and the Hashem Foods and Beverages factory of the Sajeeb Group in Rupganj, Narayanganj on 8 July 2021. In each case, locked exit routes, inadequacy or absence of fire extinguishing equipment, and various forms of negligence resulted in the deaths and injuries of numerous workers.

In most of these cases, those responsible have not been held to account, and the majority of victims and their families have yet to receive compensation. Past experience indicates that the influence and impunity enjoyed by factory owners have repeatedly obstructed justice, leaving affected workers without redress or recognition.

Odhikar calls for the publication of an accurate list of workers who were killed, injured, or remain missing in the Anowara Fashion garment factory fire. The organisation demands that victims and their families are provided with appropriate compensation and rehabilitation. *Odhikar* also urges the Government to take quick and effective measures to prevent such incidents in the future.