

One Year After Deadly Factory Collapse, Workers Still Fighting for Compensation



Jobs With Justice coalition members delivered letters to store managers calling on Walmart to compensate injured workers and their families, sign the safety Accord, and respond to the concerns of workers throughout its supply chain.

On April 24th last year, garment workers in a Bangladeshi factory were reassured that the cracks that had appeared in the walls the previous day where they were working had been repaired. Just an hour later, the building collapsed, killing 1,138 people and injuring at least 2,500. Two of the factories in the building have been linked to production of Walmart goods.

One year after this tragedy, Walmart has still refused to sign on to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. Instead, the company has promoted its own alternative which lacks enforcement mechanisms or meaningful worker input.

Workers and organizations will be holding a week of action calling on Walmart to finally address issues in its supply chain and sign the Accord. UNI Global will hold events across four continents on April 24th, and students and activists across the country will take action through United Students Against Sweatshops and the International Labor Rights Forum. Locals wanting to participate in the actions to be held on April 24th at Walmart stores and Walmart offices can find more information at <http://bit.ly/RanaActionInfo>.

Jobs With Justice also held a web conference for workers' rights advocates from three continents. It featured representatives from Asia Floor Wage Alliance, Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies, Clean Clothes Campaign, Cambodian Labor and Education Center, National Guestworker Alliance, OUR Walmart, and Warehouse Workers for Justice.

Jobs With Justice coalition members will also deliver letters to store managers across the country calling on Walmart to compensate the injured workers and their families, sign the Accord, and hear the concerns of workers throughout its supply chain.

In June of 2013, Making Change at Walmart supporters generously raised funds to bring former garment worker and Bangladeshi labor activist Kalpona Akter to speak at Walmart's shareholders meeting. Despite a history fraught with the violent suppression of labor activists in the Bangladeshi garment industry, Akter challenged Walmart to provide safer work facilities and more oversight in their supply chain. Her shareholder proposal was voted down by shareholders – a majority of those shares belong to the Walton family.

The International Labor Rights Forum also released an in-depth report on the tragedies in the Bangladeshi garment factories. The report can be read at <http://bit.ly/WaitingReport>. **OP**

New York City Elected Officials Show Support for "Carwasheros" and Worker Justice at Assembly



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Top elected officials, including Mayor Bill de Blasio, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, told some 200 "carwasheros" and their advocates that they support their fight for economic justice and the right to join a union.

In the two years since the Wash NY campaign began with the support of New York Communities for Change, Make the Road New York, and the RWDSU, workers at eight car washes have voted to unionize and have won contracts at six locations.



The three-year contracts include wage increases, job security, fair scheduling, protection of their tips, personal days and paid holiday bonuses for Christmas and New Year's Day. Workers have been motivated to organize by unfair labor practices and bad working conditions, which have been found at car washes across the city, including below-minimum-wage pay and wage theft.

This Car Wash Worker Assembly began because the carwash-eros decided to have one day out of year to come together, celebrate the victories of the campaign and set goals for the year.

One topic of the Assembly was the recent \$3.9 million settlement between Attorney General Schneiderman and car wash owner John Lage over unpaid wages, and underpayments of state unemployment and workers compensation benefits on his workers' behalf.

The campaign won successful strikes at the Sunny Day Car Wash in the Bronx, and Jomar and Off-Broadway Car Washes in Queens, saved the jobs of workers at the Soho Car Wash, secured six union contracts and brought about significant change in how workers are treated, even at non-union car washes.

"We are here at our Assembly today because united we are stronger," said Ernesto Salazar, an El Salvador native who works at Webster Car Wash in the Bronx. "We are here with the most powerful people in New York City to ask them to continue to support us and to show that we are not alone and we will win!"

Another worker, Miguel Portillo, who works at Jomar Car Wash in the Bronx, said, "This Assembly is very important to us. We want all carwasheros in New York City to come together and join our fight. When we have every carwashero fighting, I know we can win. We can win more than we can imagine."

Organizers also spoke about the Car Wash Accountability Act, which Speaker Mark-Viverito has introduced in the City Council. It would require licensing, transparency and best-practice standards. Car washes would face stiff penalties for fraud, misrepresentation or other violations. Charitable groups and others that conduct car washing to raise money would be exempt. **OP**

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The UFCW Union Plus Credit Card is specially designed to meet the needs of UFCW members and their families.

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*Certain restrictions, limitations, and qualifications apply to these grants. Additional information and eligibility criteria can be obtained at UnionPlus.org/Assistance. **OP**