

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS A DAY OF STRUGGLE

Today is International Women's Day. After early initiatives in the United States, IWD was founded in 1911 by the labour movement in Europe, seeking to mobilise working class women for their own interests and thus to strengthen the movement of the whole working class.

Since that time, IWD has been a focus for women's struggles for equality and social justice. Strikes by women workers on IWD in Russia sparked the February Revolution of 1917.

Today, women still struggle for equal rights and for the end of women's oppression. Today, sexism still harms the solidarity of the working class. Today, women's oppression still benefits the profits of the capitalists.

In the last two years, women have suffered grievous crimes and have waged great struggles.

- In December 2012 in India, a brutal rape and murder sparked weeks of unprecedented mass demonstrations against rape and violence against women.
- The Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed in April last year. Over a thousand people, overwhelmingly women garment workers, died due to the murderous disregard for building safety by employers. By November, however, the garment workers staged a series of massive strikes, winning a 77% pay increase.
- In Tunisia, there was a massive demonstration in August last year of 150,000 or more for women's rights.
- Cambodian garment workers, mostly women, in December launched a massive strike wave to double their pay. The Government crushed the strike with great brutality, killing at least five workers in January. In response, the workers last week imposed an overtime ban. Today, they are assembling in Phnom Penh to ask the politicians for wage justice. If there is no result, they will strike again.

Today, the struggle still goes on.

WORKERS CHANGE THE WORLD

**Rally Saturday 8 March, 1pm
State Library,
Cnr La Trobe and Swanston Streets**

australia asia worker links - workers change the world

po box 45 carlton south victoria 3053 australia

tel: + 61 3 9663 7277 email: aawl@aawl.org.au web: aawl.org.au

abn: 82 920 590 967 inc assn vic: A0001318V aawl march 2014



Greetings from Bangladesh on International Women's Day 2014.

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters of AAWL

On behalf of every woman worker, specially Bangladeshi women Ready Made Garment (RMG) workers, on 8th March International Women's Day – my heartiest gratitude to you. Red Salute.

This year we are observing International Women's Day in Bangladesh when women workers are victims of racism and industrial accidents. Most of the workers in RMG sectors are women.

On 24th November 2012 in Ashulia Bangladesh, the Tazreen Garments factory fire took 118 workers' lives, more than 500 workers were wounded, 24 workers are still missing. On 24th April 2013 in Savar Rana Plaza collapsed; 1138 workers died; 2500 workers were wounded and more than 300 workers are missing. It is clear that till now workplace safety and friendly work atmosphere is not available in the factories and industries in our country. Women are victims everywhere, in the house, on the road, in the workplace. This year our main issue is *Achieve a safe workplace, a safe life for women*. And we have five demands for Women's Day.

Friends, we think 8th March is not only a festive day, it is a day to take an oath to fight against all kinds of racism, violence and discrimination against woman. For this we are going to gather in a *working class women's Rally* in front of Rana Plaza at 11am on 8th March. Our demands are:

1. Highest punishment for the owner of Rana Plaza and the garment factory owners. They must be treated as killers.
2. 4,800,000 Bangladeshi Taka (\$67,000) for each dead worker's family, and the same amount for the missing workers' families. Full treatment and compensation for the all wounded workers of Tazreen Garments and Rana Plaza.
3. Improve workplace safety and working atmosphere with a democratic Trade Union. Basic monthly salary must be 8,000 Taka (\$110).
4. Stop all kinds of physical, mental and sexual abuse. Punishment for sexual harassment with a fair labor law.
5. Achieve 6 months maternity leave with salary. Baby care and breast feeding space for women workers in every work place.

We express our love & solidarity to all women in Australia and Asia through AAWL.

I can assure you we will win for which we are fighting for with your support and solidarity.

Thank you, In solidarity,

Mushrefa Mishu
President
Garment Workers Unity Forum (GWUF)
Bangladesh