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[FORMERLY NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE]

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Yet Another Rape Victim Comes Forward at Classic Sweatshop in Jordan U.S. Companies Hide behind Jordanian Government Whitewash of Rape Allegations

This week, as Classic company management and the Jordanian government prepare to publicly deny that there is evidence of the rampant sexual abuse at Classic factory, another rape victim has come forward to give her testimony. To date, scores of young women guest workers have been raped by their managers at Classic. In light of the Jordanian government's flawed investigation, the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights has no choice but to advise concerned consumers **not to purchase Wal-Mart, Hanes, Target and Sears clothing made in Jordan**. The U.S. Government must initiate a real investigation. Under the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, the American people are subsidizing rape at Classic.

- **Jordanian Government involved in whitewash**

The Jordanian Government investigation of Classic has been severely flawed by incompetency, a lack of resources and trained investigators, as well as by the deliberate campaign by Classic management to hold the foreign women guest workers in a state of terror and repression. (See [Institute's response](#) to Jordanian government's National Center for Human Rights "investigation.")

- **"Anowara" raped by Classic manager**

"I started crying, and he pushed his hand over my mouth. He said, if you try to do anything now, I'll kill you right here... Then he put his hands on me, he struggled with me, after all the struggling, I was crying. I was crying a lot... he violated me.

...I want his judgment and that he go to jail, with that I'd be happy. So he can't do this to another woman again."

"Anowara" was raped by Classic production manager Mr. Faruk Miah while sewing for Hanesbrands.

See [excerpts](#). [Full testimony](#).

- ***In light of the flawed investigation by the Jordanian Government, the Institute has no choice but to advise concerned consumers not to purchase Wal-Mart, Hanes, Target and Sears clothing made in Jordan.*** In the Institute's over 25 years of human, women's and worker rights advocacy work across the world, this is the first time we are taking such a step.
- The workers at Classic have confirmed **four serial rapists** at the Classic factory: **Anil Santha, Faruk Miah, Rafiqul Islam and Priyantha.**
- **Over 146,800 concerned consumers** have already signed the Institute's [Petition](#) on [Change.org](#) asking Hanes and the other retailers to stop the rapes at Classic.

We ask all consumers to stop and think of the young women guest workers from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who have been repeatedly and brutally raped by several Classic managers.

- ***The American people are subsidizing rape at Classic.*** Under the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, Classic is allowed to export its sweatshop clothing to the U.S. duty-free –in the process rewarding Classic, Hanes and the other companies a ***windfall profit of \$20 million in tariff breaks in 2010 alone!***
- Attached are [16 interviews](#) conducted by the Institute, including rape victims who have suffered horribly at the Classic factory while sewing garments for Hanesbrands.
- More new worker/victim testimonies will be released as the campaign goes forward. The minute the reign of terror and repression is lifted at the Classic factory, scores of new rape victims will come forth. It is only a matter of time.
- See [What the Jordanian Government fails to understand](#), a statement by Marina Fernando, director of International Studies, City College New York, who interviewed several of the Classic rape victims. Also, see [Why rape victim cannot speak out at Classic in Jordan: the predicaments faced by migrant workers employed in slavery-like conditions](#), a statement by Saro Aiyar, an advocate for the rights of migrant workers from Sri Lanka.

- See [**A Way Forward: The U.S. Government must take the lead in the investigation of Classic**](#)

Download a complete press kit with all supplemental materials at
<http://www.globallabourrights.org/admin/documents/files/110914-IGLHR-Press-Kit-Yet-Another-Victim-Comes-Forward-at-Classic.pdf>

For more information about the campaign, please visit
<http://www.globallabourrights.org/campaigns?id=0036>

Attachments:

Rape Victims at Classic Speak Out.....	4
“Anowara” Testimony of Yet Another Rape Victim.....	14
What the Jordanian Government Fails to Understand by Marina Fernando.....	27
The Predicaments Faced by Migrant Workers Employed in Slavery-Like Conditions: Why Rape Victims Cannot Speak Out at Classic in Jordan by Saro Aiyar.....	28
A Way Forward: Toward Resolving the Crisis at the Classic Factory in Jordan.....	29
Response to Flawed “Investigation”: Cover-up of Classic Sweatshop By the Jordanian Government’s National Center for Human Rights	36

Rape Victims at Classic Speak Out

1.

"Anowara"

"My name is "Anowara." I went to Jordan in 2005... When we get there, we have our passports in hand. Then when the company puts us in the car, they take the passports away. [This is human trafficking.] ...The bra and panty we did, that was "Champion" buyer... From 7:30 in the morning until 4:00, we had general duty. Then, until 11:00 at night it would be running, until 12:00 even. Like this they worked us... They would yell at us, curse at us, cut our pay...

The rape: *Then he [Bangladeshi production manager, Faruk Miah] comes over, and as he is talking he puts his hand on me, like this. I said, what are you doing? Then we started struggling, fifteen, twenty minutes, it went on like this. Then I started crying, and he pushed his hand over my mouth, he said, if you try to do anything now, I'll kill you right here. ...After all the struggling, I was crying, I was crying a lot... he violated me. Yes, he opened my clothes, he opened my pants... He said, if you try to tell the company, I'll send you to jail here.*



Interviewer: *So, did Faruk do this to any other girls?*

“Anowara”: *He does, but a lot of girls don’t have the guts to say anything. He threatens to send them back or put them in jail.*

Interviewer: *Do you know anything about any other rapes?*

“Anowara”: *Yes. Anil [Santha] did it to two other girls. One girl, it happened to her, but she...right here in Jordan... They cleared it [abortion] up here... He would call them to the office to do his business. He had a personal office in there.*

Interviewer: *Who called them?*

“Anowara”: *Anil*

Interviewer: *He did it in the office?*

“Anowara”: *He would take them in the office and rape them.*

Interviewer: *How many people did he rape like this?*

“Anowara”: *A lot of people, but there are the main two that came to light, the most serious, so they sent them away. I think they kept them 15 or 20 days, until they recovered, then they sent them back.*

Interviewer: *Okay. Do all the workers know that Anil rapes women?*

“Anowara”: *Yes.*

“Anowara”: *The rape he [Faruk Miah] did to me, the abuse he did to me, I want justice for that.. I want his judgment and that he go to jail, with that I’ll be happy. So that he can’t do this to another woman again.*

① Access “Anowara” full testimony [video](#) and [transcripts](#)

2 .
"Nazma"

"The he [Anil Santha] grabbed me here and threw me on the bed..."

Then he, I'm wearing a uniform, these he already tried to open in the car, he said "open."

After...the office scarf, I'm wearing the office scarf, he grabbed my scarf and pulled it off.

Yes, yes, I had a dress on, then he brought me to the room, I was just saying, No, no, because I don't understand his language, so I just said, No, no, no sir, I'm saying it but he's not listening. There was a big tussle....then, this whole time, I'm just saying, No, no...that day, I was wearing the yellow dress...when he grabbed the dress and pulled it, it tore here at the neck...then, all my clothes, he took them off.

Then, I cried a lot.

He said, this much I understood, if you tell anyone, I'll put you in jail.

He said it in Hindi, "jail jaiga."

He was with me here for about half an hour.

Yes, I was crying the whole time.

The covering that was on the bed, I was holding that around my body and crying – he pushed me to the bathroom, I was in the bathroom for a long time, 10, 15 minutes. Then I came out, I put my clothes on....



...Yes, I had a lot of pain. A lot."

Nazma was brutally raped three times—first in March and then twice in May, 2011.

① See [full interview](#) of June 2011

3. "Latha"

"My request is that it doesn't matter who it is, but please bring some relief to what we suffer...Please help us. Help save the lives and innocent dreams of these workers. Please do something to have Anil removed so that the lives and hopes of other innocent girls are not destroyed further."

"He [Anil] summoned me to his office and made his demand, and warned me not to tell anyone... I was in a deeply helpless position because he is such a high-ranking figure in the factory I couldn't disobey him... There is so much sadness in me. So he asked me to come... I feel so exposed and shameful sharing what he did to me... the things that happened to me. And it wasn't only me, there were three or four other girls there too. He did this to us in the presence of one another... If any one of us either talked about this episode or did anything about it, the person would be immediately deported to Sri Lanka... What is tragic is that more and more girls arrive at the factory fresh and will continue to fall prey to this monster."

① See full interview [video](#) and [transcripts](#) of May 2011

4.

"Kamala

"I was molested in every way... That man tortured me. He took a lot of sexual advantages from me... I had to fulfill everything he desired because I was placed in an extremely vulnerable situation and intimidated... My whole body is in pain... I cannot face my mother and father. I am destroyed. I cannot even change clothes before my mother because Priyantha has destroyed me. I have teeth marks all over my body.

Priyantha destroyed me completely... I cannot take my own life because I am extremely poor. I am the only one to take care of my parents. This is why I came here [to Jordan].

The reason I'm telling all this is because I don't want another young woman facing the same harassment and assaults that I did. What I appeal for is, whoever might listen to this, please make sure justice is served. Don't let another young woman face the molestation I faced when taken into a room."



① See full interview [video](#) and [transcripts](#) of October 2010

5.

"Kanthi"

"It happened to me too. There is so much shame attached to it. There are others who have been raped too. But there is so much shame that we don't even discuss it with one another. ...There are other girls like me. They may be willing to speak to you."

① See [full interview](#) of May 27, 2011 (p. 13-14)

6.

"Gori"

"When the Sri Lankan [Anil] enters onto the floor all women tremble with fear and everyone sits silent... He takes out women workers for sexual abuse... We protested his immoral activities and wanted him to get out of this factory."

① See [full interview](#) of February 2011 (p.15-16)

7.

"Chandra"

"One girl died—last month on January 1, 2011. Her name was ["Soma"]. She was just 21 years old. Anil had made her pregnant and given her some medicine and an injection. She had gotten a fever the next day—did not go to work and was found dead on the floor. She was one month pregnant. She told everyone it was the boyfriend's baby—Anil had told her not to utter a word—threatened her and also said he will give her money. The boyfriend had been devastated after her death and tried to hit Anil and was sent back [deported] to Sri Lanka....."

"The women are taken by force regularly to a hotel. They are sometimes told they are being taken to another factory or they are accused of not making the target and they would be physically abused. Anil would make unwanted physical contact—touching the women's chests and bodies. Many of the women have video clips of what happened. Anil is not aware of that..."

① See [full interview](#) of February 2011 (p.17)

8.

"Halima"

"Already, he [Anil Santha] has taken new girls to his house in the last two to three days... You know, the good looking girls who come, they have an attraction, a lust for them... Even now there are two or three girls, Bengali girls they are doing this to.

...Yes, they are raped there once they go. This has already happened to two or three girls... The ones that get pregnant, they send back, and the ones that don't, they keep to work..."

① See [full interview](#) of April 2011 (p.18)

9.

"Munir"

"[Anil Santha] is a very rude man... In the company everyone is afraid of him... If he likes any woman in the factory who is beautiful and young, he asks her to do a body massage. He takes her to his office and home and asks them to serve him both by doing his domestic work as well as pleasing him sexually... The girls cannot complain... and if girls refused to please him, he sends them back to their country..."

① See [full interview](#) of April 25, 2011 (p.20)

10.

"Nirosha"

"I have to say with regret that [Classic factory] is a place where there are many harsh and evil people working... They also behave in a sexually offensive manner. When workers reject their unwelcome sexual advances, they throw 'pieces' [clothing] at them. This has happened to me as well... His hobby is to touch women's body parts and look at them."

① See [full interview](#) of May 2009

11.
**Egyptian Guest Workers
Speak Out**

“The manager of the factories [Anil Santha] mistreats the Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi women workers and forces them to go out with him. And if they don’t go out with him [have sex], he punished them by fabricating an accusation, so that the factory terminates their contract and deports them back to their country...”

Letter in Arabic, February 2011

12.
“Ms. Nayani”

“My name is Nayani. They take beautiful girls into rooms, and make them become pregnant. [They] send them off to Sri Lanka... Invite to go to rooms and in there beat me. The girls are not cared for at all...”

Interviewed December 2010

13.
**Letter from Workers
at Classic Group**

“We must kindly request you to understand the situation in this factory and try to bring some justice to all our workers... Mr. Anil is the manager of Classic Group. He treats the workers badly and does not hesitate to hit/assault them... Though we managed to remove him from Classic [during the strike of October 2010], he has returned and the environment in Classic is back to what it used to be...”

He (Anil Santha) uses women to satisfy himself sexually...

He would beat women and send them away as he desires...”

Workers’ letter, December 2010

14.
Letter from
Young Sri Lankan Women Worker
at Classic

“I write this short introduction to you, esteemed sir, because there is nobody who will come forward on our behalf. I have in my heart that you will direct kind eyes toward us to solve these difficulties we are going through. Also, the secrecy of this is with you. I, the one writing this letter, am working as a female...

... there is a factory manager, Mr. Anil. There is nothing not known about him. There is so much torture that he inflicts on the young women.”

...These people, they harass the young women very much.”

Undated letter

15.
Rapes at Classic
Go Back to at Least 2007

“...At least two young women from Sri Lanka, recruited as foreign guest workers to work at the Classic Fashion Apparel factory in the Al Hassan Industrial Park in Jordan, report being raped by managers at the factory. The women sewed clothing for Wal-Mart and other companies.

The victims, both assaulted early in 2007, are Ms. Nisansala and Ms. Nine Maris.

Ms. Nine Maris was raped by Mr. Anil, a manager at the Classic factory. After becoming noticeably pregnant, she was deported back to Sri Lanka. Ms. Nisansala reports being raped by another factory manager, Mr. Sintaiker [Chinthaka].”

(The two rape victims were fired and forcibly deported to Sri Lanka. Classic was producing clothing for Wal-Mart, Hanes, Gap and Gloria Vanderbilt.)

Source: “Three Thousand Workers Strike in Jordan sewing for Wal-Mart and other companies” National Labor Committee, December 14, 2007.

16.

Bangladeshi Woman Groped

“We went to bed and to sleep. There are two rooms for Bengalis on this floor. Most of the Sri Lankan workers live here. It was around 12:00 midnight. The owner of the dorm (Mr. Haitem) and the nephew of the factory owner (Matthew) came here. ...Very often we hear the voice of men at 12:00-1:00-2:00 a.m. at the dorm. Haitem pushed workers into the room. I asked him why he entered the women’s room. He touched the women’s bodies and pushed them inside the room. We fell and were injured. They broke the door. He first attacked me. He touched women workers’ bodies. Sir, we are Bengali.— We feel shy. We cannot express full details, but he touched our sensitive organs of our bodies. We are terrified. My dress was torn from this.”



Interview with Bangladeshi women in Classic dorm, January 2008.

“Anowara”

Testimony of Yet Another Rape Victim

*[Anowara is a pseudonym.
She was raped in early June 2008 and came forward to tell the truth in August 2011.]*
◊ Access [full testimony video](#)

Interviewer: What is your name, when did you go to Jordan, and how much money did it cost you to go to Jordan? These three things, please tell me.

“Anowara”: My name is “Anowara.” I went to Jordan in 2005. After arriving in Jordan, people from the company pick you up from the airport. When we get there, we have our passports in our hand. Then, when the company puts us in the car, they take the passports away. Separately, they take us each to our rooms. Then, after awhile, they got the food ready and after everyone ate, they told us the following day, at 8, they'll take us to the office. After taking us to the office, everyone is given work at whichever machine, whoever can do each machine, they had to work at that machine. So, it goes on like this, and slowly...

I: Okay, well, to go to Jordan, when you were coming to Jordan, how much money, what was the cost of going to Jordan?

A: Going to Jordan cost about Tk. 100,000 [about US \$1350].

I: How did you get that money?

A: Some I got a loan from a bank, some they put a mortgage on our plot of land, some my brother gave.

I: How much total?

A: About Tk. 100,000.

I: Okay. How old are you, well, actually, when you went, what was your age then?

A: Now, at present, I'm 31.

I: Okay, that's fine, present age is fine. Now, when you were returning from Jordan, who gave you the cost of the ticket, please tell me that.

A: Faruk sir.

I: But how? Please tell the story.

A: Faruk sir abused me, raped me. After he did this, I wanted to tell the company. But he didn't let me tell, he didn't let me report it. He said if you report it, I'll send you back to Bangladesh, I'll send you to jail here. I was so scared, I didn't say anything. I was sick then anyway. He took me two days. One day he took me to Amman to get my passport okayed. I didn't know, he said he was taking me to the doctor, but he took me the passport office, so I asked him, why did you bring me here, this isn't the medical. He said, no we need to come here first, I'll take you to the medical after. Then I didn't say anything else, he brought me home. He said your examination will be there. Another day he took me to Ramtha. After taking me, for the passport...I don't understand any Arabic, he had me sit in the office, and he completed it. After completing it, he took me home. He did this for two weeks, after two weeks, they took me to the office. But they didn't let me go up to the office, I mean, the boss's office, where they handle the money. They took me there, to get my signature. They said, after you sign, we'll give you money. I said, what money? They told me, they're sending you back to Bangladesh. I said, why should I go to Bangladesh? They said, you're very seriously ill. I said, no, no, I won't go. They scared me with that, then suddenly, they took me to the airport. When they took me to the airport, I understood, they're really going to send me. They didn't give me any money at all, out of nowhere, they just took me to the airport, saying we were going to the doctor. Talking about the doctor, they just took me to the airport.

I: In the Classic factory, which factory did you work in and what kind of work did you do?

A: First I went to 2, I did about one and a half years there. Then they started making trouble, they started agitating [hard to translate this word, along the lines of uprising, struggling, making movement]. They don't give us time off, they work us long hours, don't pay us right, because of this, they did an uprising, after doing the uprising, they put all the Bengalis in [Classic] 3 and kept the Sri Lankans in [Classic] 2, they divided us. Because of the trouble, I worked three years in [Classic] 3. In 2, I mostly did bras, in 3, they gave me bras and denim too, jeans.

I: Why did you change factories?

A: After all the trouble, they changed it, they separated the Bengalis and the Sri Lankans. They said, Bengalis don't do any work, so that's why. They changed to see if Bengalis do work or if the Sri Lankans work. They used to get it done somehow together, the shipment would go out, but the money was never right. Then, after separating us, they see the Sri Lankans can't send a shipment. After seeing this, the boss decided to mix us back together. He called us all together and said, what happened happened. You're all my workers, they're all my workers. All are my children. So he put us all back together, and gave some Bengali and some Sri Lankan back to each [factory].

I: The clothing you made, what brand were they and what kind were they, can you explain?

A: You know the buyer, Champions, that buyer's bras and panties, also denim. But I don't know the buyer for the denim. The bra and panty we did, that was Champion buyer.

I: What did you do?

A: 7:30

I: In a day, what was your target, in how many hours?

A: In an hour, it was 120 pieces. From 7:30 in the morning until 4, we had general duty. Then, until 11 at night it would be running, until 12, even like this they worked us.

I: Was it like this every day or just sometimes?

A: At the beginning, everyday was like this. But after the uprising, when we went to [Classic] 3, after we learned everything, were more experienced, then slowly they lessened our duties.

I: But if you couldn't finish...

A: If you couldn't do it -

I: Wait, let me finish, so if you couldn't do the work, if they couldn't take the shipment, what would they do to you?

A: They would yell at us, curse at us, cut our pay, one hour, one and a half hour.

I: Why?

A: Because the target wouldn't get filled up, so they'd cut our pay.

I: But lots of times, many people, maybe because of health reasons, they can't finish it – wouldn't the owner understand this?

A: The owner doesn't try to understand, the owner isn't there anyway, that's..the managers, the boss, they look at that, the owner doesn't always come, he knows he has a production manager, he puts the target out – the owner doesn't come on the line to see, who's working like what, who's sick, things like that.

I: How many days a week would they cut your pay, all six days, seven days?

A: Six, seven days. The days the orders don't get filled, that day we get cut.

I: How many days a week are like that?

A: Two days, three days, sometimes just one day.

I: And they don't pay you anything when they cut your pay like this?

A: No.

I: Totally free?

A: Totally free. And when it got really hard, then they'd give us overtime for a day or two, whatever they felt like.

I: So what does that mean, how many hours did you work total, from the morning on?

A: Fourteen hours, sixteen hours.

I: Tell me, from the morning until night, how many hours would you be working? Tell me your schedule.

A: From morning until night. During then, they'd give us tea time, they'd give us lunch time. Tea time is 15 minutes, lunch times is 30 minutes.

I: How many times would they give you tea time?

A: In the morning, and again at 5.

I: The place where you lived, what was the environment like that, what were the conditions?

A: It was okay, acceptable, but not great.

I: How many people were in one room?

A: In a big room, ten people, in a small room, 8 people.

I: And how was the environment, what was it like, was it clean or...?

A: Mostly, it was clean. The water was short sometimes, then they'd bring it with a truck, we had both hot and cold.

I: Was the factory open on Fridays? I understand normal days, you're working 14 hours, but your off day, Fridays, was it open even then?

A: At first, they kept it open. After we made the trouble, then they didn't keep it open anymore. Sometimes, if they had a shipment, then they'd tell us in advance.

I: In a week, how many days would they keep it open?

A: Two days open, two days closed.

I: Okay. The strike that happened, when did it start and when did it end?

A: I don't remember the date...

I: No, I mean, how long did it go on?

A: One, one and a half months, the trouble went on, they didn't pay us for one month.

[Interviewer takes a phone call]

I: What kind of time off did you have each week? Did you have any?

A: We had, we had two days off, the rest of the days we were open.

I: Sometimes, were there times when they made you work on days off?

A: Yes.

I: Please tell us about that. You had days off, but still had to work?

A: We had off, but they'd tell us, we have a shipment, come in and work, we'll let you off at 4 o'clock.
They wouldn't keep us like this often, but sometimes they did, to finish the shipment.

I: In a month, how many Fridays would you work?

A: In a month, out of four weeks, we'd work two Fridays, if there was work that had to be done.

I: If there was work?

A: Yes.

I: Okay. Faruk, that man, the incident that happened, how did it happen, how did he do it, the whole incident...tell them to be quiet please!...Faruk, you know him..

A: Yes.

I: This man, Faruk, when did he do this incident, how did he do it...[side conversations, yelling at kids to be quiet] ...okay, go ahead, tell me.

A: After lunch, around 2 or 2:30, this incident...

I: What day was it..

A: Three...

I: Let me finish, what day was it, how it happened, when, please tell me the story.

A: I don't remember the day. The day...I don't remember. Around 2 o'clock, he went. His "mother" [*Faruk usually addressed the dorm super as "mother," although she is not his real mother.*] is there, the guy they keep to watch everything, I mean, his "mother", he came and called her. He called her, he knocked and said, is there a sick girl here? What room? Is the gate open? So he saw, the gate's open, they're taking care of me, so his "mother" said, yeah, she's lying down, she's sleeping. So he said, okay, you stay here, I'll go and see. So she stood by the gate, and he comes inside. After he comes inside, he put his hand and saw I have a fever. Then, he closed the gate. After closing the gate, I said, why'd you close the gate, huh *bhai* (informal greeting)? Ever since the mechanics said *bhai*, I don't call him boss, I just call him *bhai* too. Then, he says, oh just because. Then, he comes over, and as he's talking, he puts his hand on me, like this. I said, what are you doing? Then we started struggling, fifteen, twenty minutes, it went on like this. Then I started crying, and he pushed his hand over my mouth, he said, if you try to do anything now, I'll kill you right here.

I: Faruk, this guy, who is he really, that he went over there? Who is Faruk?

A: Faruk went there as a worker, he went in the mechanic's post. When he went in the mechanic's post, when the Bengalis, Sri Lankans, we didn't understand much...he had some education, he was very tall, handsome, so, everyone thought..well, we had a boss, called Rafiq sir, they kept him in [Classic] 2, he knew the Sri Lankan language, he was apparently in Dubai for a long time, he was in Jordan too a time before apparently, he knew a lot of languages...so there wasn't anyone Sri Lankan in charge in [Classic] 2, so they kept Rafiq sir over there, and since [Classic] 3 needed a boss, they made [Faruk] the boss.

I: So please tell me more about the incident. When he raped you...

A: Yes.

I: I mean, well, how long was he there...

A: From 20 to 25 minutes..

Interviewer 2: Like how he took her clothes off, how he approached

Interviewer 1: Right, tell us more of this subject please, what did he say, what did he do?

I2: [can't make out]

I1: Yes, yes, she already told some of this...please go on. What happened?

A: He...

I: You being sick, he took advantage of this situation right?

A: Yeah...

I: Okay, please, go ahead.

A: When I got sick, he came to see if I was sick, when he came to see, then slowly, then he put his hands on me, he struggled with me, after all the struggling, I was crying, I was crying a lot, but even after all the crying, he wouldn't listen, so I told him, if you do this, I'll tell the company. He said I'll send you back, after saying a lot of things to scare me...he violated me.

I: Did he take your clothes off?

A: Yes, he opened my clothes, he opened his pants.

I: He did it himself?

A: Yes, he did it.

I: Then what did you do?

A: I cried and pleaded, tried to get up again and again, but he wrestled with me, told me a lot of things to scare me, I shouted, he grabbed my throat, and pushed his hand over my mouth.

I: For how long did he rape you?

A: Twenty, twenty five minutes he struggled with me, then, he did it.

I: When he raped you, he had taken your clothes off?

A: He didn't take the clothes off, he just, my *salwar* (pants)...

I: Did he have any marks anywhere you can remember?

A: No, well, he didn't take his shirt off, he came wearing this shirt, he didn't open his shirt, he just opened his pants.

I: And when he opened his pants, did you see anything, any marks or scars...?

A: I didn't look so closely, I was just struggling, I didn't look so closely.

I: When he raped you, did he use a condom?

A: No, he didn't use a condom. He didn't use anything.

I: After the rape, you had a bathroom nearby? After the rape what did he do?

A: There is a bathroom close..he went to the toilet, washed his face and hands...

I: Then?

A: Then he came back.

I: Okay. Then what did you do?

A: What am I supposed to do? I washed myself, what could I do?

I: Okay. There, was there just that room? Weren't there other people in other rooms?

A: No, I was in the sick room.

I: What time was it then?

A: Two to two-thirty.

I: Okay. Do you remember what date it was?

A: No.

I: How did he..after he raped you, when you came back, what did he say to you? What kind of things did he say to scare you?

A: He said, if you try to tell the company, I'll send you to jail here. I said, even if you send me to jail, I'm telling the company. You did this...pushing-pulling with me, even if you send me to Bangladesh, my husband will leave me now, if he finds this out. It's better that I die. I said all this, he put his hand up to hit me, threatened me more. I said, I'm going to tell the company. He went to go to the office, but his "mom" didn't let me go. She called on the phone and said, "Anowara" is fighting like this, let them know, to the company. So his "mom" didn't let me go outside the gate, she phoned and let them know. So I guess between them somehow, they came up with the idea, with Faruk's own money, they got me ticket.

I: After being raped, how long after did they send you back?

A: Around 20 to 22 days

I: So for 20 to 22 days you were in the house?

A: Yes.

I: They didn't let you go anywhere?

A: I went to the store, there's a store at the house, you can food and things, like a supermarket

I: But they didn't let you go to the factory?

A: No, they didn't let me go to the factory.

I: Okay. After raping you, how many days were you in your room, why did they keep you from doing any work?

A: When I said I was going to tell the company, because of this they didn't let me go to the company. They said just stay in your room, you're sick. You'll be paid for this month. You'll get your pay...

I: How did they send you back, please tell us.

A: He told me, the doctor...

I: Who's he? Please use his name.

A: Faruk sir told me, let's go. I asked him, go where? He said, you're going to the office. They'll give you your salary, you have to give your signature. You know, your salary...you've been home sick right, so your salary is here, you have to go pick it up. So, I gave my signature, I went and gave my signature. But they didn't give me any money, I was like, what's going on, they didn't give the salary money...he says, they're saying they won't give you your salary, your pay didn't pass. Your application didn't get filed. I said, why didn't it get filed, I gave the application, why didn't you file it? It didn't pass, that's all he said. When he brought me to the airport, this scheme is you and Anil's, sending me back. He said, what scheme? You're not well. He said bad things about me. You're not a good girl, you're a bad type of girl, we can't keep you in the factory. I said, you're the one who made me bad, you're the one who raped me, who abused me, took everything from me. What belongs to my husband only, you took that. Now I'm going to Bangladesh, if my husband finds this out, my husband will leave me, he'll give me a divorce.

I: How did you know he gave the money...

A: He took my signature...

I: No, I mean, it cost you to come right

A: Yes

I: The money to go back, how do you know who exactly gave it?

A: I don't know exactly who gave it, if Faruk or Anil gave it, I don't know. But I know they took my signature, and when I came to the airport, I found out Faruk gave it. The owner doesn't know this.

Then I made some calls, I phoned some of the workers, but nobody knew anything. When I came to the airport, I called, I said this is what's going on, they brought me to the airport. They didn't know anything. They were like, what? And I said, yeah, they're sending me back. They said, what are your clothes and things? I said, clothes and things, I don't know. They said, we'll pack it up for you, his "mother" is here, we'll pack it up and put in a car later, they didn't give anything with me. Half of the clothes and things are just lying there, some of it they just packed up somehow and brought it to me.

I: So, your salary, your social security, did they give you any of this?

A: Now, if the company gave me anything, I don't know, but Faruk sir took my signature saying they'll give me everything...

I: Give you what?

A: All the money, he'll give me all of it, but they didn't give me anything.

I: So did Faruk do this to any other girls?

A: He does, but a lot of girls don't have the guts to say anything, he threatens to send them back or put them in jail.

I: Do you know anything about any other rapes?

A: Yes, Anil did it to two other girls. One girl, it happened to her, but she...right here in Jordan...they cleared it up here, how I don't know...

I: What does cleared mean? Please explain.

A: One girl, she got pregnant...

I: Please say it again.

A: Pregnant...I mean, she had a child...when she came, he took her to the hospital and did something, an abortion, we don't know what he did. Then she got sick, they did some treatment, and sent her back to Sri Lanka. Then he was fine for awhile. Then he...out of nowhere, a girl, she got pregnant. They sent her back just like that, with child. Her husband, he used to work here. Even with her husband there, [Anil] forcefully made love with her, going to her house. She said, he seduced me. He didn't seduce her, he forcefully did his business, and after going to the house, he would call them to the office to do his business, he had a personal office, in there.

I: Who called them?

A: Anil.

I: He did it in the office?

A: He would take them in the office and rape them.

I: How many people did he rape like this?

A: A lot of people, but these are the main two that came to light, the most serious, so they sent them away. I think they kept them 15 or 20 days, until they recovered, then they sent them back. Another girl, who this happened to, they sent her back to her country pregnant, she went back and filed a case. After doing the case, she came to Jordan monthly to attend the court hearings.

I: Okay. Do all the workers know that Anil rapes women?

A: Yes.

I: What do you mean?

A: I mean, everyone knew about Anil's, but Faruk sir's ones weren't found out. Nobody told.

I: When you worked at the factory, did anyone hit you?

A: Yes, sometimes they would hit us, slap us...

I: How, please tell.

A: They would curse at us, slap us.

I: Why?

A: Because the production wouldn't get done, so, they'd curse at us, they'd slap us.

I: Did they ever hit you?

A: Yes, one day Faruk sir hit me before.

I: Where, how did he hit you?

A: On the runway. He just slapped me.

I: With cloth on the runway or his hand?

A: He slapped me with his hand!

I: With the other girls, do they try to touch them...with bad intentions...

A: Not with bad intentions, on the line they don't do things like that...just for work things, they give a slap or something, or curse at us.

I: Now, if you told the office, what kind of action could they take

A: They'd send you away

I: Well, are there any instances where they told the office, where they did something on your behalf, are there any situations like that, or would they do the opposite?

A: The opposite reaction, they sent them away.

I: Who told management?

A: Yes. If you try to tell, they threaten to send you to jail, to send you to Bangladesh. So nobody says anything. Like me, I said, I'm going to tell no matter what. That's why they didn't let me go to the company and didn't even let me work. Like that they got me a ticket and sent me back. Now if they got the ticket from the owner's pocket, or if Faruk sir gave it or Anil gave it, nobody knows. None of the workers know, the staff don't know either, only Faruk sir and Anil know.

I: How many months of salary did you have left of your work, and do you want that money?

A: I want the salary of course, and I want justice. The rape he did to me, the abuse he did to me, I want justice for that.

I: How many more months do they owe you?

A: About two months. One month, for work...when they had me sitting there, not working...and social security. And then, one year they had extended my contract. If I'd stayed that one year I would have gotten some more money.

I: When you came back, did you have any money in hand?

A: Yes, I did. There was some money I was owed anyway, so I would withdraw that money. When I was sitting at home, I was thinking, I need money, they need money back home. They need money back home. Then I was owed some money from people, so they gave me that money and I sent it home, that's all. Other than that, I didn't have any money at all. When I was coming back, I wasn't able to bring anything.

I: Okay. Faruk sir, do you think he should go to jail?

A: Of course. I want his judgment and that he go to jail, with that I'd be happy. So that he can't do this to another woman again.

I: How many girls do you think, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan...

A: Altogether, we were about 950 workers, boys and girls together, but how many Bengalis...I think around 400.

I: No, I mean rape, how long do you think these rapes have been going on?

A: About a year, a year and a half it's been going on. A year, a year and a half, I started seeing it. After we got there, the Sri Lankan girls used to tell us, Anil is very bad. We used to talk to them and they'd tell us things. What I saw, he seemed nice, he'd talk to everyone, he'd come around at Eid time, he'd speak at ceremonies. He drinks alcohol and he'd come around and say nice things, put his hand on everyone's head affectionately. Then we all thought he was pretty good. But the Sri Lankan girls would tell us secretly, don't ever talk to Anil alone in a room, don't talk to him too freely.

I: What is Anil? What country is he from?

A: Anil is Sri Lankan.

I: What was his position?

A: He was the manager.

I: What do most of the workers think of Anil?

A: They didn't think well of him, but they were kind of scared of him, you know, cuz he'd say I'll send you back to Sri Lanka, things like that...everyone was always a little scared. They wouldn't say anything in front of him, just off to the side.

I: What would they say?

A: Just, don't mix with him, don't go to the factory alone if he calls you, don't go into a room with him alone.

I: What would happen if you went alone?

A: He'd say all sorts of bad types of things to you, or call you names and things.

I: Do you think -

(End of recording)

What the Jordanian Government Fails to Understand

A Statement by Dr. Marina Fernando, PhD
Director, International Studies Program, City College, New York
September 13, 2011

(Dr. Fernando worked with the Institute interviewing several of the rape victims at Classic.)

"One of the questions that first surfaced when I interviewed the Sri Lankan women at Classic Jordan factory, and one that has dogged the issue of the rape of females at the factory since it became public knowledge, is "Why have these women not come forward to complain about the rape?"

When I asked the question of the women, the answer was, "To whom can we complain?" Their movements at the factory and its environs are tightly controlled. They are Sinhala speaking women with no proficiency in either English or Arabic. They have no knowledge of the laws of Jordan or of any support system they could tap into. In short, they are completely dependent on the perpetrators of the rape.

The women I interviewed told me that women who refused the advances of the managers were deported forthwith. Granted this would give them immediate release; but these are women who have pawned jewelry and borrowed money to pay the fees of the recruitment agencies in Sri Lanka. Their families are supported by the remittances they send home. The only option open to them is to keep quiet about the abuse and complete their contracted term of service.

There is also the issue of "lajja"—shame. The stigma of rape in traditional societies is daunting. The women admitted that they didn't discuss the problem even among their friends. "Kiyanna baerikama" (something that cannot be talked about) was the phrase used by one of the women to explain her reluctance to talk about it. When I interviewed the women on the phone, it took a long while before they addressed the issue of rape. Their first concern was whether they would get into trouble for complaining about it to anyone. They were also ashamed of having been violated. These are very young women, with little or no prior experience of sexual contact. They are women who hope to marry and raise families in a traditional society, and the stigma of violation weighs heavily on them. If their plight is reported, the social consequences far outweigh the immediate liberation from the abuse.

And finally, there is the issue of trust. I had to establish my bona fides as an older Sri Lankan woman and a mother before they felt enough confidence in me to unburden themselves. One has to ask, "How could these women talk to an impersonal bureaucrat about their trauma and shame? And what guarantees can anyone give them that the outcome will be a safe and satisfactory one for them?" These questions have since guided me in my own role in trying to help them. Their need for protection is paramount. As powerless victims, their plight calls for compassion, and not skepticism. We need to guard against the convenient practice of blaming the victim."

The Predicaments Faced by Migrant Workers Employed in Slavery-Like Conditions

Why Rape Victims Cannot Speak Out at Classic in Jordan

Ms. Saro Aiyar

Advocate for the rights of migrant workers

Sri Lanka

In addition to the stigma of rape and the fact that our society is ignorant of the power issue involved in rape, generally considers it a matter of consensual sexual intercourse. This fallacy also adds to the stigma, because women, especially the rural village women are expected to be innocent and virtuous and not provoke the carnal desires of the men, unlike the urban temptresses.

Sri Lankans like many others in the region are not educated sufficiently on the predicaments faced by migrant workers employed in slavery like conditions, or for that matter, the dangers that live-in domestic workers face from the men in the household.

Many in our society also tend to have a rather servile attitude towards their employers and as such many employers get away with abuse. Even the concept of sexual harassment in the workplace is relatively new in Sri Lanka, and only a very few brave women have the courage to speak up and challenge their abusive and exploitative employers on sexual harassment charges.

So the predicament faced by the women guest workers in Jordan in speaking up is perfectly understandable and the fact that they have been isolated from the male workers who may have been able to provide them with a modicum of protection would make them terribly vulnerable. In such a situation any threat to their physical, mental or emotional safety would be sufficient to ensure their silence.

The problem in prosecuting rape cases in under-evolved countries is that the State still considers it a “he said she said” issue and in the absence of hard evidence, gives the benefit of the doubt to the alleged rapist.

Unfortunately I come from a country that still looks at bullying even in the best of schools, indulgently on the basis that “boys will be boys”. What they don't seem to get through their heads, is that these “boys” are the sociopaths of the future. But sadly a change in these attitudes will take a very long time.

A Way Forward

Toward Resolving the Crisis at the Classic Factory in Jordan

September 14, 2011

Charles Kernaghan

Director, Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights

Today, the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights is proposing a far-reaching joint investigation of the Classic factory, lead by the U.S. Government, and joined by Wal-Mart, Hanes, Target and Sears, and the Jordanian Government to either bring the Classic factory into compliance with the human, women's and workers' rights provisions in the U.S. Jordan FTA or, if that is not possible, to shut the Classic sweatshop down.

Ten years into the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, the 30,000 foreign guest workers who drive Jordan's booming export garment industry still have no right to decent working conditions; no protection against forced labor; no freedom of association, right to organize or to bargain collectively. Clearly the Government of Jordan is in violation of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement.

To date, the investigation of Classic has been severely hampered by a lack of resources, trained investigators and proper research techniques combined with a deliberate campaign by management to hold the foreign women guest workers in a state of fear and repression.

Classic is Jordan's largest exporter of garments to the U.S., and was the recipient of **approximately \$20 million in duty free tariff breaks in 2010 alone!**

A thorough investigation of the Classic factory in Jordan will have a very positive and lasting impact, and in the process dramatically enhance respect for workers' rights standards in all existing and pending free trade agreements.

The single most important step necessary to initiate a thorough investigation of the serious alleged violations at Classic, is the involvement of skilled investigators from the U.S. Government.

What Must Be Done:

- 1.) **We urge that the U.S. Government lead the investigation of Classic**, in cooperation with the labels and Jordanian Government.

It is a serious lapse that the Jordanian prosecutor's office was unable to find any of the Classic drivers who ferried Anil Santha and his young women victims to rented safe houses where he repeatedly raped them. Certainly the Classic factory had to keep records or videotape of the comings and goings of Classic cars and vans, noting when they left the factory, how long they were gone and what the destination was. Moreover, skilled investigators could track how Anil Santha chose and paid for his various rented safe houses.

Nor was Ms. Jhuma, a Bangladeshi supervisor, seriously questioned. This would be very important, as Ms. Jhuma acted as an enabler to Anil, fetching the young women Anil requested and bringing them to the Classic car where Anil and his driver were waiting.

There are also solid leads linking Anil Santha to rapes as far back as 1992, when he worked in garment factories in Tanzania and then Dubai—(Santha was kicked out of both countries for sexual abuse of young women)—before Sanal Kumar, Classic's owner, brought Santha to the Classic factory in Jordan. Workers in these factories referred to Anil Santha as not only a serial rapist but a “slave driver.”

- 2.) **Documents must be seized from the Classic factory:** The U.S. Government should procure all relevant documents in the possession of Classic management, *including records of all Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi workers who were deported from Classic over the last five years.* Many of these deported workers were rape victims. Others were targeted for termination and deportation for asking for their legal rights, or because they acted unofficially as the “leader” or “spokesperson” for the Bangladeshi or Sri Lankan workers.

According to what we have been told by officials of the Jordanian Ministry of Labor, both the Labor and Interior Ministries had to sign off on Classic management's requests to deport “problem” workers (i.e. young women who had been raped or workers who asked for their rights)—although we also do know of cases where Classic managers, such as production manager **Faruk Miah**, were able to bypass the Jordanian Ministries of Labor and Interior to deport a rape victim who threatened to denounce him.

The deportation documents list the workers' names, job category, ID number, passport number, how long he or she worked at Classic, the reason why he or she was being deported, the name of the worker's parents and the village they are from.

These deportation documents will surely include many rape victims who were terminated for daring to speak out about their rape.

Twice, once in 2008 and again in 2010, thousands of Classic workers went out on strike, even withstanding being tear-gassed by Jordanian police—to demand an end to Anil Santha’s reign of rapes. Twice Anil Santha was kicked out of the Classic factories and Jordan, only to be returned through the intervention of his friend, Sanal Kumar, Classic’s owner. It must be obvious to everyone that thousands of workers would not go out on strike, facing tear-gas, beatings and threat of firing—if they were not dead serious that the main serial rapist had to be removed.

Good Faith steps that must be agreed upon with the U.S. labels in order to immediately suspend the widespread campaign against Classic:

Over **146,800** people have already signed the petition on Change.org, and—if anything—the campaign continues to grow.

- 1.) Anil Santha, Faruk Miah and Priyantha—all alleged serial rapists—must be immediately suspended and prohibited from entering the Classic Group of factories or having any contact whatsoever with Classic workers until a thorough investigation has been concluded with the help of the U.S. Government.**

The immediate and definitive suspension and removal of these alleged rapists will have a transformative impact on factory conditions. The veil of repression will begin to lift, giving workers the hope and strength that conditions at Classic could improve.

A “star witness” central to Jordanian prosecutor’s office, Ministry of Labor and National Center for Human Rights joint investigation is being coached, threatened and managed by a Classic production manager who is himself a rapist. Classic’s owner, Sanal Kumar, has put a Bangladeshi production managers, Mr. Faruk Miah, in charge of threatening and coaching the “star witness” and other Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan women workers, instructing them to lie that factory conditions are excellent and rapes never happen, as women are treated with great respect.

The only problem is that Mr. Faruk Miah is himself a rapist. This is the Classic manager the National Center for Human Rights, the Ministry of Labor and the Jordanian prosecutor’s office is relying on.

He violently raped a young Bangladeshi woman in her dorm. After she threatened to denounce him, Faruk Miah locked her in the dorm for three weeks before forcibly deporting her back to Bangladesh under false charges. ([Watch videotaped interview with the rape victim “Anowara.”](#))

- 2.) **Corporate monitors along with Jordanian and U.S. Government investigators should participate in a serious, day-long meeting in Jordan to hear from highly respected women’s rights advocates from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.** It is critical that these women’s rights leaders have the chance to discuss the trap the young women guest workers from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are in. For the first time in their young lives, they are thousands of miles from home and away from their families. They do not speak Arabic. They and their families have gone into debt to raise the money necessary to purchase their three year contracts to work in Jordan. If anything goes wrong and they are terminated and deported, they may drag their families into bankruptcy. This is the burden these young guest workers face, and why they are so vulnerable to abuse. They are in a trap that keeps them silent.

The women’s rights leaders can explain why there are “**worse things than rape.**”

Any young woman from Sri Lanka or Bangladesh who dares to publicly denounce her rapist will never be able to marry, have a family or a decent life. She may even be shunned by her parents. As mentioned, for daring to speak of her rape, the young woman victim may also be immediately imprisoned and forcibly deported under false charges..

But it gets even worse. Women who publicly accuse their rapist can be killed. In Sri Lanka, it can cost as little as \$200 or \$300 to have someone assassinated. It is impossible for many of us to even imagine the deadly trap these young guest workers face.

- 3.) **Women’s rights advocates from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the U.S. must have periodic access to enter Jordan** and continue dialogue and education of the young women guest workers at Classic. This could initially require quarterly visits, but as trainings take hold, visits could be cut back to twice a year. Of course, these advocates must have the ability to enter Jordan immediately in case of emergencies. (This is important since, to date, the Jordanian Government does not allow foreign NGOs to operate in Jordan.)

Once the iron curtain of repression at Classic is lifted, and the men and women garment workers from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have the **right to free speech**, the alleged rapes and other violations at Classic will be at an end.

What the American people must know about the U.S. Jordan Free Trade Agreement and the failure of corporate monitoring

- **Duty-free access to the U.S. market is a privilege, not a corporate right:** Corporations must realize that duty-free access to the U.S. market under the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement is a privilege based on specific obligations, and not a corporate right. Duty-free access—which is very lucrative for Classic and its corporate clients—is conditioned on respect for Jordan’s labor laws and the core, internationally recognized worker rights standards—including no forced labor, decent working conditions, freedom of association and the right to organize a union and to collectively bargain. It is abundantly clear that the Classic sweatshop in Jordan does not come any near to meeting these standards.

We estimate that in 2010 alone under the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, Classic, Wal-Mart, Hanes, Target, Sears, Macy's and Kohl's received **\$20 million dollars in tariff breaks**. Without duty-free access, this \$20 million would have gone into the U.S. Treasury. Another way to look at this is that the American people have given the corporations \$20 million in tariff breaks. **The question is: Do Classic, Wal-Mart, Hanes, Target, Sears and the others deserve these privileges?** Under any serious and independent investigation of the Classic sweatshop, **the answer would clearly be "No."** If gross violations at the Classic factory in Jordan persist, the American people should explore ways to demand our \$20 million back.

Again, duty-free access to the U.S. market is a privilege, not a right.

- **"Déjà vu all over again!" The short memories of corporate monitors.**
For the first five years of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, from 2001 to 2006, *the very same corporate monitors we are dealing with today, could not find a single significant violation in Classic or any of the other garment export factories across Jordan.*

In fact, from 2001 to 2006, the U.S. Jordan Free Trade Agreement descended into the human trafficking of tens of thousands of foreign guest workers, who were stripped of their passports—and international crime—and held under conditions of indentured servitude, forced to work grueling 16-hour shifts, seven days a week, while being shortchanged on their wages, beaten, housed in primitive dorms and often suffering serious sexual harassment and abuse.

In all candor, have you ever met a corporate monitor who admitted they made some serious mistakes?

- **Do corporate monitors support human engineering and sex discrimination?**
This happened in 2007 and 2008, when export garment factory owners—like Classic's Sanal Kumar—asked the Jordanian Government to **immediately ban the import of any Bangladeshi guest workers**. The factory owners said that the Bangladeshis were troublemakers. The workers were asking for their most basic legal rights, and this had to be stopped. The Jordanian Government did what the corporations asked, and immediately banned all Bangladeshis from entering Jordan.

The corporate monitors remained silent.

Then, in 2010, when garment exports to the U.S. were soaring by over 34 percent, the same factory owners went back to the Jordanian Government reversing themselves and now saying they needed lots of young Bangladeshi women guest workers to staff their factories—since they were hard workers, and willing to work for 61 cents an hour. However, they did not want Bangladeshi men to be allowed to enter. The Jordanian Government immediately agreed, and thousands of Bangladeshi young women began to flood into Classic and the other factories.

Once again, the corporate monitors saw nothing wrong with this human engineering and sex discrimination. One has to wonder what values and standards the corporate monitors do have.

- **The Corporate Model of Monitoring is broken...**

In a recent article in *Women's Wear Daily* (August 9, 2011, "*Retailers React to Jordanian Factory Allegations*"), *Wal-Mart goes out of its way to associate itself (three times in a single paragraph) with Better Works Jordan, as comrades in arms, valiantly struggling together to clean up the Classic sweatshop.* For any authentic human, women's or worker rights organization, *Wal-Mart's over-the-top endorsement would be the kiss of death.*

What the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights has learned over the last seven years while working in Jordan is that the tens of thousands of poor young foreign guest workers, most of them women from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, China, Egypt and elsewhere, who toil long hours under harsh conditions in garment export factories, have learned to have no trust in Jordanian authorities. Of course, the guest workers cannot understand Arabic. But it goes much deeper than that. The guest workers' experiences with the Jordanian Ministries of Labor and Interior, the Jordanian police, and Jordanian factory managers and supervisors have not been good at all. As punishment, every month in Jordan, scores of guest workers are routinely imprisoned, and many forcibly deported under false charges leveled by corrupt factory managers with the support of the Ministry of Labor and Jordanian police.

To protect themselves, the guest workers have learned through harsh experience to always respond to Jordanian authorities saying what they think the Jordanians want to hear.

When Better Work Jordan's U.S. and Arabic staff enter the factory, the guest workers know they have to lie. It's all a game. Senior guest workers in Classic and other factories have told us that no one takes Better Work Jordan seriously.

Better Work Jordan sets up "Management-Labor Participatory Committees" in each factory they monitor. *Someone should ask Better Work Jordan who in Classic management was appointed to their Participatory Committee. It is very possible that alleged rapists are among the Classic supervisors and managers who were appointed to the Participatory Committees.*

Better Work Jordan admits that it is extremely difficult to uncover sexual harassment and abuse in Jordan's garment export factories, as the young women guest workers are "reluctant to speak openly." *In other words, the rape victims are terrified. The only women's and workers' rights advocates who could possibly help these rape victims would be highly respected women's rights advocates from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who the guest workers know and trust. But this is exactly what the factory owners, labels and Jordanian Government refuse to do.*

Now it is easy to see why Wal-Mart loves Better Work Jordan.

United Nations Expert Expresses Doubts on Corporate Monitoring

After years of field research, Mr. John Ruggie, a special representative to the U.N. Secretary General for human rights and transnational corporations, and a professor at Harvard, concludes that corporate monitoring of factories does not work.

“We keep hearing now, from just about everywhere...monitoring doesn’t work...just about everybody, at least off the record, will tell you that monitoring doesn’t work and auditing of supplier factories doesn’t work because people cheat.”

Special representative Ruggie believes that ***any sustainable monitoring will have to involve governments.***

Women’s Wear Daily, June 4, 2009

“UN Expert Expresses Doubts on Monitoring”

Response to Flawed “Investigation”

Cover-up of Classic Sweatshop By the Jordanian Government’s National Center for Human Rights

By Charles Kernaghan
Director, Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights

September 8, 2011

AP 09/08/2011: [Jordan rights group: no proof of rape at factory](#)

Not an independent human rights organization: The National Center for Human Rights is part of the Jordanian Government.

Track record of ignoring gross human, women’s and labor rights violations:

Over the course of five years (2001-2006), as the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement **descended into human trafficking**, with tens of thousands of young foreign guest workers **stripped of their passports (an international crime), beaten, forced to work grueling hours under deplorable conditions, seven days a week while being cheated of their wages, with rampant sexual abuse**—The National Center for Human Rights **did not lift a finger** to protect to the fundamental human rights of these guest workers.

There has been no serious investigation of the brutal Classic sweatshop:

The National Center for Human Rights was **unable** to secure the records of the Classic company drivers who used company cars to ferry serial rapist Anil Santha to rented safe houses where he raped his young victims. Has the National Center for Human Rights interviewed the supervisor, Ms. Jhuma, who acted as an enabling, fetching the young women Anil Santha asked for and taking them to the Classic car where Santha was waiting? Did they find any logs, records or videotape regarding the Classic drivers’ whereabouts on the days Anil raped his young victims? This is all very basic stuff, and just the tip of the iceberg. We can only conclude that the National Center for Human Rights is either unwilling or ill-prepared to conduct a serious investigation.

**“Star Witness” central to the National Center for Human Rights
“investigation” is being threatened and managed by a Classic manager who is
himself a rapist!**

Classic’s owner, Sanal Kumar, has put a Bangladeshi production manager, Mr. Faruk Miah, in charge of threatening and coaching the “star witness” and other Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan women workers, instructing them to lie that factory conditions are excellent and rapes never happen, as women are treated with great respect.

The only problem is that Mr. Faruk Miah is himself a rapist. This is the manager the National Center for Human Rights is relying on.

He violently raped a young Bangladeshi woman in her dorm. After she threatened to denounce him, Faruk Miah locked her in the dorm for three weeks before forcibly deporting her back to Bangladesh under false charges. (Within a matter of days, a videotaped interview with the rape victim will be available.)

The National Center for Human Rights refuses to allow respected independent women’s rights leaders from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to meet in a safe location with the Classic women workers, with a 100% guarantee that no worker will be punished for daring to speak the truth.

We repeatedly explained to the Centre that the *tens of thousands of young women guest workers from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Egypt and China would only speak truthfully if they were in a safe location and in the presence of credible, independent women’s and worker rights NGOs from their home countries—who they know, trust and respect. Such meetings must be held in a safe location, where factory management cannot spy on the workers*—since workers who are “ratted out” by spies are often imprisoned on false charges and then forcibly deported.

We even offered to pay the travel costs to bring internationally recognized women’s and worker rights advocates to Jordan for a meeting between the International Centre for Human Rights and the guest workers.

Every time we asked the Jordanian government’s National Centre for Human Rights to allow independent women’s rights advocates to enter Jordan, *they refused*. This is a serious question:

What is the Centre so afraid of? Any genuine, independent human rights organization would gladly accept the assistance of respected women's rights leaders.

The National Center for Human Rights apparently supported corrupt factory owners in their demand to ban Bangladeshi workers from entering Jordan.

If it is true, this would be a first for a "human rights organization."

In 2007, when the Bangladeshi guest workers in Jordan began seeking their legal rights, the government of Jordan immediately responded to appeals of the factory owners by banning all Bangladeshis from entering Jordan. They were "troublemakers" the factory bosses said. Is it possible that the National Center for Human Rights supported the banning of all Bangladeshi guest workers?

In July 2010, with garment orders booming, the factory owners reversed themselves, asking the government to lift the ban to allow young Bangladeshi *women* to be recruited to work in their sweatshop factories. *Does the National Centre for Human Rights also support this human engineering and gender-based discrimination against Bangladeshi men who might wish to work in Jordan?*

These are important questions, and the National Centre's positions on these issues will speak volumes about its credibility as a human rights organization.

In the United States, we take for granted that there are effective, independent human, women's and worker rights organizations, strong independent unions and an independent press. This is definitely not the case in Jordan.