



Statement on recent allegations of sexual assault at Classic Fashion Apparel

Tuesday 14th June 2011

Better Work Jordan is deeply concerned about recent allegations of the serial rape and sexual exploitation of migrant workers by managers at the Classic Fashion Apparel Industry factory. Sexual assault in the workplace is an issue that Better Work Jordan takes very seriously, and given the disturbing nature of the allegations made by the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights, we support calls for a criminal investigation.

Better Work Jordan has had confidential meetings with workers at Classic to encourage them to report inappropriate or criminal behaviour. We will monitor closely the treatment of any worker who comes forward to report abuse and work with other authorities in Jordan to ensure their wellbeing. We also call on the Government of Jordan to protect any workers coming forward with information from retaliation by management or workers.

Better Work Jordan Enterprise Advisors use a variety of techniques to uncover any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment or abuse, while recognizing that the sensitive nature of the issue, as well as cultural and religious norms, may prevent workers from reporting incidents of sexual harassment or abuse. Migrant workers in particular are among the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in the workplace, as they may be fearful of deportation and lacking the freedom to change employers. This is compounded by the fear of social stigma that can arise from being labelled as a victim of sexual harassment or assault.

Sexual harassment and assault is a complex issue which must be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. For this reason, Better Work Jordan will continue to review and revise its assessment protocols and is working towards implementing a specialized programme to deal with these issues, including preventative measures and advocacy, in all of the industrial zones containing garment factories in Jordan.