

# **Internationaler Nürnberger Menschenrechtspreis**

## **Festakt zur Preisverleihung am 27. September 2015**

im Opernhaus Nürnberg

### **Rede von Preisträger Amirul Haque Amin**

Sperrfrist: Sonntag, 27. September 2015, 12.30 Uhr

- Es gilt das gesprochene Wort -

The honorable Lord Mayor, the Vice-Chancellor, Assistant Director, ILO, Uniglobal - Head of commerce, distinguish guests, sisters and brothers:

Please accept greetings from the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) & garment workers of Bangladesh.

This is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to accept the “Nuremberg Human Rights Award 2015” at this ceremony here in Nuremberg - the city of human rights. Nuremberg is very renowned for the Nuremberg trial which is encouraging the human being to strive for justice & peace and it is a great reference for all over the world. In Bangladesh, now a days ‘trial against war crimes’ is undergoing that were committed during our Liberation War in 1971. The Bangladesh War Crime tribunals are getting inspiration from the historic Nuremberg trial.

This award ceremony is taking place in a moment where the west Europe is facing the biggest immigrant crisis after the Second World War and the German government has taken a remarkable step in that issue which is highly appreciated. In last week in the media the German Vice Chancellor also criticized a powerful nation in that regard who is responsible for this issue and he also suggested taking some responsibility in this crisis. This is also a great example of upholding the human rights.

At this very moment, let me allow paying deep sense of respect to the all garment workers, who had experienced death or injury in Rana Plaza, Tazreen tragedies and other workplace accidents. Rana Plaza tragedy alone killed 1,138 and mostly of them are women garment workers while, the Tazreen killed 118 workers. Over 2,500 workers were injured in these two tragedies. These ill-fated workers were nothing but the victims of sheer lust for profit by factory owners & brands.

I strongly believe that through this award, you have recognized the everyday struggles of the Bangladeshi garment workers for labor rights, safe workplace & living wage. You know that each award is an inspiration and this award will also inspire me, my organization and my fellow colleagues to work further in the human rights issue related to garment workers. At the same time I would like to recognize all the trade unions home and abroad including IndustriALL, UNI, DGB, Verdi, IG Metall, who have contributed a lot in this issue.

Dear all let me allow to say few words about me and my organization and existing condition of garment workers in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh at present there are 5000 garment factories and 4.2 million workers are working in this sector. 85% of them are women. This sector contributes 81% of the countries exports.

I started my journey back in 1984 through founding this National Garment Workers Federations with some other colleagues. On that time I was a student of University of Dhaka. On that time there was no provision of May Day paid holiday, festival bonus, weekly holiday, maternity leave, appointment letter and wage structure in the garment sector. You will be happy to know that because of our long campaign and struggles and cooperations of our international friends now a days garment workers are enjoying May Day as a national paid holiday, getting festival bonus almost throughout the whole sector. They are also getting weekly holiday, maternity leave, appointment letter in many factories.

By this time a minimum wage structure is also been approved by all the stakeholders though the wage is poor and unexceptable. The wage is only between 60-80 euro in a month among the garment workers. As workplace related accidents like fire incidents, building collapse were quite common in Bangladesh, compensation for the victims were also very poor. Because of our activities a legal compensation has been set which is approximately 1100 euro and another 1100 euro in the form of insurance.

You will be happy to know that we achived several times more compensation through bringing all the responsible parties including multinations, factory owners and government for the victims of Rana Plaza, Spectrum and Tazreen. At the same time to ensure the safe workplace Bangladesh building and fire safety Accord is working – that is legally binding agreement between unions and more than 200 multinationals. Safety inspection process almost finished but unfortunately remediation plan or corrective measures are going very slowly. In this regard I am urging to all the signing multinational and other stakeholders to ensure the necessary funds so that this corrective measures finish quickly.

In this occasion I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the juries who have selected me for this award. Through this award to a trade union activist they basically recognize the workers and trade union rights including safe workplace, living wage, decent work and the freedom of association in the form of human rights once again.

At the end I would like to extend my gratitute to Nuremberg International Human rights office, Ms Martina Mittenhuber, Ms Doris Gross and Ms Theresa for their fantastic support and assistance and organizing this event.