

## **Article Myanmar Labour News, February 2023**

<https://www.myanmarlabournews.com/posts/638>

Response to Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2023

General comments:

Thank you for the commitment of “Business and Human Rights Resource Centre” to continuously survey the working conditions in the garment industry; in Myanmar and globally. Blåkläder appreciate that reports of suspected misconduct have come to our attention, to enable us to investigate the situation. Furthermore, we also welcome the opportunity to provide the conclusions of our research.

Blåkläders ambition is to produce workwear and safety garments in a transparent and controlled supply chain, characterized by a high level of health, safety and with great respect for labor law and human rights. This is realized through our long term commitments to suppliers contacts and close cooperation with all partners in our supply chain.

Our cooperation with Amava Apparel Ltd, Ayeyarwady Division Pathein, was initiated when the factory first started up in 2017.

The establishment of Amava Apparel Ltd was preceded by thorough investigations and during the establishment an extensive dialog was held with both international and national initiatives. These contacts includes, but are not limited to, Responsible Business Myanmar, ILO Yangon, SMART Myanmar, EuroCham Myanmar and more. Everything to enable the establishment in the country to be carried out with regard to high demands on health/safety and human rights.

Our ambition is to drive positive development in connection with the production of our products, even though in a limited perspective. We are firm in our belief that the drives behind change and progress only can become efficient through engagement and presence, not from boycott and exclusion.

In terms of 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier suppliers, and upstream supply chain, our general protocol is to nominate all ingoing material and component suppliers. We aim to work on long term basis with all our suppliers and our eldest supplier contacts dates 30 years back in time. The main objective is to know exactly where, and under which circumstances, each and every part of our products are manufactured. This can only be achieved through long term and close relationships with our supply chain contacts

All fundamentals in terms of cooperation with Blåkläder is laid down in Blåkläder Suppliers Guide including, but not limited to, our Code of Conduct.

Post dated February 2023, Myanmar Labor News

*Allegation:*

*In the aftermaths of the military coup, workforce have been dismissed and especially persons know as union representatives have been faced with even extended difficulties to find new employment.*

*After confronting a company, when being denied employment for no obvious reason, a person states that Amava Apparel has provided a record of "blacklisted" to other companies of former employees that was connected to the union and engaged in labor rights.*

Blåkläder response:

Amava Apparel does not "blacklist" pervious employees. In contrary, many companies are actively seeking to attract and retain qualified personnel, as there is a trend for skilled workers to seek opportunities abroad. The reference is rather that pervious employees of Amava Apparel Ltd are attractive labor also for new employers.

General amendment:

Blåkläder is committed to a close and transparent cooperation with Amava Apparel Ltd. Dialog is conducted daily and visits to the factory are conducted on a frequent basis over the year.

The factory conducts employees surveys to measure employee well-being in the workplace and to identify areas for continuous improvements.

Meeting Minutes, employment records, labor work force overviews and other documentations are available to support the events and actions described in this response from Blåkläder, with the support of Amava Apparel Ltd.

Noted, in connection to the allegations in question, is that the established Whistleblower function has not been used in order to highlight the alleged deficiencies and irregularities.