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Dear BHRRC,

RESPONSE TO TURKEY SITUATION POST EARTHQUAKE 27 Feb 2024

Thankyou for the invitation to provide an update on the situation in the region in Turkey that was affected by the earthquake.

At Marks & Spencer, ethical trading is core to the way we do business, and all our suppliers must adhere to our Global Sourcing Principles, that set out the minimum requirements and expectations of how we and our supplier partners conduct business.

We are a very small buyer from the affected region, sourcing from only 3 factories. And during our regular visits and as part of the annual 3rd party audit workforce demographic analysis, we can confirm that none of these sites employ any Syrian workers.

However, to support any migrant workers in our Turkish supply chain, we have been in partnership for many years with MUDEM, an NGO that enables both Syrian and domestic workers to submit any concerns through a web-based grievance mechanism that provides direct feedback to the brand representatives.

Since the earthquake, we have been in regular contact with our factories in order to identify any ongoing needs of the people in the region. Immediately after the earthquake our factories kept all jobs open, provided transportation for workers if they had moved away and they did not terminate any contracts. In addition, they provided food and clothing, as well as advanced payments if requested.

In February 2023, workers in some factories, requested leave until June, July and August which was granted given the situation. During the subsequent 6 months, while the jobs were still kept open, the Human Resource and Administrative Affairs departments were in contact with the workers to establish if they could/would return to work. After this time, many workers stated that they would not return to work for several reasons and subsequently voluntarily resigned. According to the Labour Law and having consulted expert labour law consultants and social security professionals, it was established that legislation does not require employers to make a severance payment if an employee leaves the company voluntarily.

Many factories in the region still have additional vacancies and are suffering from labour shortages, so for any workers who could not be contacted or did not return to work after 6 months, the labour law allows the factory to terminate a contract in order to start the recruitment process. If any workers have subsequently not agreed with this, and are taking companies to court, the factories management has confirmed that they will follow the court decision.

Given the situation in the region is still not stable, we have had several joint Brands meetings and visits to establish if anything further needs to be done. For example, as a result of a recent visit, we have agreed to have a joint meeting with the Turkish LBL representative.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and have joint Brand meetings, to collaborate on any future activities.

Best wishes,

M&S Ethical Trading team

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