

Ivanka Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

CC: Abigail Klem, president of the Ivanka Trump brand
Morris Goldfarb, chief executive of G-III Apparel Group
Susan Itzkowitz, president of Marc Fisher Footwear

November 1, 2017

Dear Ms. Trump:

As a member of the administration that has made Buy American/Hire American a core tenet, that production of your Ivanka Trump brand product line is offshored to China and elsewhere is hypocritical. Moreover, there is compelling evidence that the workers at these facilities face abusive conditions.

You have spoken often about your advocacy for women and girls. You recently spoke about fighting human trafficking, saying you view the issue as a “clarion call to action in defense of the vulnerable, the abused, and the exploited.” You also lauded “the heroes who continue to shine a light on the darkness of human trafficking.”[1]

Yet several media reports this year, including a comprehensive Washington Post investigation[2] published in July, have highlighted multiple allegations of abusive treatment of women workers at footwear and garment factories in China and Indonesia where workers make apparel and shoes bearing your brand. Abuses include verbal and physical abuse[3] of workers as well as 15-hour work days[4], wage deductions and fines for workers.

Investigators from China Labor Watch found grave abuses[5] this spring at two factories that made Ivanka Trump-branded shoes in China. The investigators were then detained for a month on criminal charges of using illegal surveillance equipment (i.e. mobile phones and cameras for recording images and footage to document illegal practices) before being released on bail pending trial.[6] At the same time, similar abuses appear to be prevalent[7] at an Indonesian factory making clothes for the Ivanka Trump label.

You have taken steps to separate your role at the White House from your apparel and accessories brand, stating in January that you “will no longer be involved with the management or operations” of the Trump Organization or the Ivanka Trump fashion brand.[8] Nevertheless, you hold a powerful position in the White House, while also profiting from your clothing lines and the increased prominence of your personal brand.

Thus, you have a responsibility to use your position to raise standards for workers. We urge you to use your White House position as a bully pulpit to raise standards for workers in the

United States and around the globe, especially those that make clothing bearing your name.

As the Post investigation found, your company “lags behind many in the apparel industry when it comes to monitoring the treatment of the largely female workforce employed in factories around the world.” Many U.S. clothing companies, the report noted, have hired independent auditors to monitor labor conditions at offshore production facilities and pushed factory owners to make improvements. Disturbingly, your brand merely relies on significant offshore production and relies on these suppliers to enforce a code of conduct that bars physical abuse and child labor, according to the Post report.[9]

This is an unacceptable stance. Even though you have removed yourself from the brand’s day to day operation, you can still make it clear that all apparel and footwear companies have a moral obligation to improve their sourcing practices. Now that China Labor Watch’s investigators have been persecuted because they are investigating factories supplying your namesake company, you have an extra obligation to do so.

Many global apparel companies are publishing the names, addresses and other important information about factories here and abroad that are manufacturing their branded products.[10] Doing so lets consumers know where the goods they purchase are made. Without such identification, it is extremely difficult to identify apparel companies whose products are made in factories where labor rights abuses are found. Publication of the name and location of factories will help to identify the brands when there are severe violations of workers' rights; for example, following the 2013 building collapse in Bangladesh, which killed more than 1,110 garment workers, it was extremely difficult to identify the buyers because at that time very few companies revealed their suppliers.

We urge you to:

- Publicly demand that the Chinese government not pursue criminal prosecution of the three China Labor Watch investigators.
- Work to ensure labor rights and fair treatment of the workers who make Ivanka Trump-branded products, irrespective of whether they are direct employees or employed by suppliers or in what country they work.
- Allow independent workers’ rights organizations to monitor working conditions and talk to workers about their labor rights.
- Publicly disclose the names and addresses of factories making Ivanka Trump-branded products.
- To the extent you intend to continue sourcing your goods outside the United States, sign the 2018-2021 Bangladesh Accord on Building and Fire Safety, to ensure that workers producing Ivanka Trump-branded apparel in Bangladesh can be sure the factories where they work are not deathtraps.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Teachers
Child Labor Coalition
China Labor Watch
Communications Workers of America
Community Action for Justice in the Americas, Africa, Asia
Fair World Project
Farmworker Association of Florida
Food & Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Global Exchange
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)
International Labor Rights Forum
Jobs With Justice
Kentucky State AFL-CIO
National Consumers League
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ
Public Citizen
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union
Service Employees International Union
UltraViolet
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press

Sources:

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- [4] www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/06/21/china-factory-ivanka-trump-brand-shoes-criticized-labor-violations/103071256/
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