

RMG TRADE UNION ORGANIZING 2010-2020 (As of 12/31/2020)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
# of unions applied for registration	1	10	12	158	392	150	133	128	76	44	19	1123
# of unions approved by JDL		1	1	84	182	67	77	92	59	19	11	593
# of unions rejected by JDL	1	7	5	44	155	148	49	33	22	15	8	487
# of applications withdrawn	-	-	2	0	5	2	3	3	4	3	0	22
# of unions pending in JDL as of December 31, 2020												21

(1) The number of rejections may be higher than reported because registration/rejection information was not available from all federations

(2) Comprehensive data to assess the current status of every factory-level unions organized since 2010 is not available.

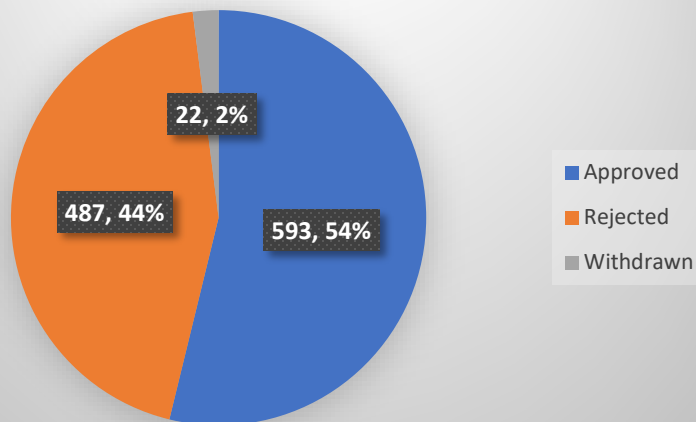
Some of the unions listed may have been busted, factories may have closed, or the union may have become inactive.

Please note that the data represents the efforts of independent trade union federations who are current or previous partners of Solidarity Center, as well as other union organizing efforts of which Solidarity Center has reliable information. This data includes only union organizing efforts that the Solidarity Center can verify; therefore, there may be other instances of other union applications, registrations, or rejections that are not represented in this data.

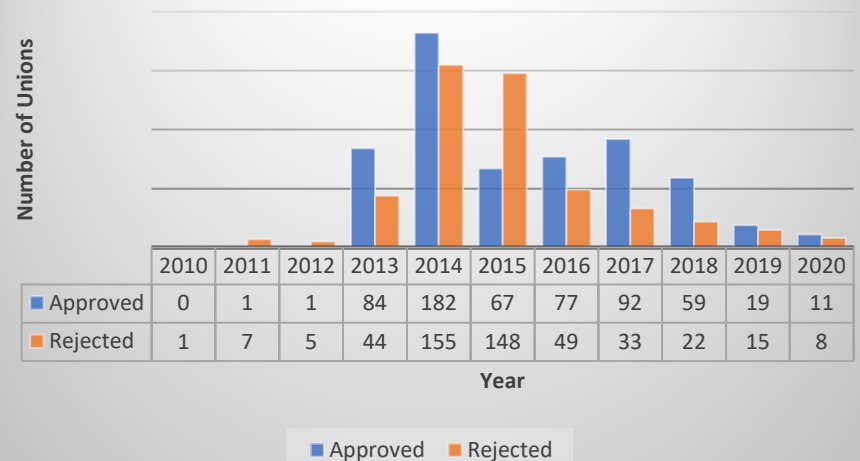
Note: Chart excludes pending union applications

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Union Application Approved and Rejected, by Year



RMG TRADE UNION ORGANIZING 2010-2020 (as of 12/31/2020), cont.

This data maps trends in trade union organizing and registration in Bangladesh’s ready-made garment (RMG) sector from 2010 to 2020. Prior to 2013, intense suppression of the right to freedom of association severely restricted the ability of workers to organize and register new unions in the RMG sector. With the collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013, one of the world’s worst industrial disasters, international outcry led to new scrutiny over safety and health conditions at the bottom of the apparel supply chain. The union organizing environment changed dramatically. For the first time, workers had leverage to organize unions and collectively demand change. Emboldened by the support of civil society and consumer activists, trade pressure and worker-driven, binding, and enforceable corporate accountability agreements, like the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety, workers organized 392 unions in 2014 alone. However, as international attention waned, backlash against the rising labor movement derailed many of these initial gains. The decline in union applications and registrations reflects increasing retaliation, including threats, intimidation and violence against trade union leaders and active members, unlawful dismissals or forced resignations of union activists, the arrest of union activists on unfounded criminal charges, time-consuming and complex union registration procedures and arbitrary rejection of trade union registration applications and the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it also reflects the strategic decision of some trade union federations to organize larger factories, which is more difficult and takes longer to achieve, but will ultimately benefit a larger number of workers. Despite these setbacks, today trade unions represent the rights and interests of workers in hundreds of factories and are collectively negotiating better wages and working conditions for hundreds of thousands of garment workers.

Trade Unions Organized in 2013

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
# of unions applied for Registration	2	8	9	8	10	16	26	8	10	16	24	21	158
# of unions approved by JDL	3	3	11	2	5	7	10	5	10	11	4	13	84
# of unions rejected by JDL	-	-	-	3	1	4	6	4	7	7	5	7	44

Trade Unions Organized in 2014

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
# of unions applied for Registration	33	25	32	28	37	28	33	28	36	29	47	36	392
# of unions rejected by JDL	4	5	4	16	10	6	22	15	15	19	25	14	155
# of applications withdrawn	2	0	0	0	0	0	1					2	5

Trade Unions Organized in 2015

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
# of unions applied for Registration	24	24	12	11	12	17	5	12	4	9	13	7	150
# of unions approved by JDL	26	4	11	5	3	3	5	2	1	2	1	4	67
# of unions rejected by JDL	26	25	15	20	9	7	10	13	3	8	4	8	148
# of applications withdrawn	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2

Trade Unions Organized in 2016

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
# of unions applied for Registration	11	22	7	8	9	14	5	10	11	14	11	11	133

