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## **FASHION VICTIMS - sweatshops round the world**

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SPORTS fans are being told the true cost of their designer gear in a hard-hitting new campaign.

Trendy labels such as Nike and Adidas are not cheap for the wearers.

But the real price is the human misery endured by underpaid, overworked people around the world who slave away making the products, according to Oxfam.

The charity have teamed up with trade unions to expose the sweatshops in which the sportswear which will be in the spotlight at this year's Olympic Games is made.

Goods from top labels are produced by workers earning as little as 60p a day in factories in Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and China.

The Play Fair at the Olympics campaign says the factories are also notorious for physical and verbal abuse and even sexual harassment.

Some of them are poorhouse-style plants, where workers have to pay for accommodation that is little more than a cramped box.

One residential workplace in China has 100 workers sharing seven water taps.

Some workers are docked a month's pay or fired for being off sick, while any attempts at forming a union or complaining are met with harassment and sackings.

In one Indonesian factory, which produces clothing for firms such as Nike, Puma, Adidas, Fila and others, female workers are harassed and threatened with the sack if they refuse to have sex with supervisors.

Some Chinese factories force workers to do a seven-day week. In Bulgaria and Turkey, refusing overtime is virtually a sackable offence.

Oxfam trade campaigner John McAllion said yesterday: 'The majority of workers in the sportswear industry are women. They are paying a heavy price for their jobs.'

'Their health, the welfare of their children and their family life are suffering as a result of long hours, poor conditions and low pay.'

'We need to change the way these companies do business and make trade fair.'

Oxfam's report includes harrowing accounts of exploitation from workers across the Far East and eastern Europe.

Indonesian worker Elina said: 'There is a lot of verbal abuse. They call us lazy, stupid, useless .

'Physical abuse happens too. Our ears are pulled and managers yell directly into our ears as well.'

Another worker in Indonesia said: 'Male managers bribe the girls, with money and threats of losing their jobs, to have sex with them.'

Recent statistics show that the sportswear industry is worth £30billion a year.

Some firms have launched inquiries into working conditions and Nike and Adidas say they are determined to change things.

But for thousands working for pennies in dark, poorly ventilated, factories, any improvements cannot come fast enough.

Mary Senior, of the Scottish TUC, said: 'The Olympics are supposed to be a showcase for fairness and human achievement. But the sportswear industry is violating that spirit.'

Junya Yimprasert, of the Thai Labour Campaign, said: 'If hypocrisy and exploitation were an Olympic sport, the sportswear industry would win a medal.'

Nike, Adidas and Umbro said last night they welcomed the report and were working to ensure suppliers provided good conditions for staff.

#### UMBRO SPORTS CAP

Made in China

Workers are refused time off when ill. If workers leave the factory, they lose a month's back pay.

#### PUMA SPORTS VEST

Made in Indonesia

Workers are kept on temporary contract so they can be laid off when orders are low and rehired for peak periods. Women are paid for meeting daily targets, which often require many hours of unpaid overtime.

#### TRAINERS

Made in China

100 workers in factory accommodation share six or seven taps and have to queue for one to two hours to wash after long hours at work.

#### ADIDAS TRACKSUIT BOTTOMS

Made in Cambodia Staff required to work without breaks for long hours. With overtime, they earn \$2 (£1.10) a day. During low seasons, pay is so low it is hard to survive on.

## FILA SOCKS

Made in Indonesia Union workers are harassed for trying to improve conditions.

Source: Oxfam, based on interviews with workers in factories

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