

# UK's Next joins list of clothing retailers pausing Myanmar orders

By [James Davey](#)

- \* Next CEO says move is “big step”
- \* Orders switched to Bangladesh, Cambodia and China
- \* Primark, H&M, and Benetton have also paused orders (Adds detail of where Next’s orders have gone instead)

LONDON, April 1 (Reuters) - Britain’s Next on Thursday joined a growing list of European clothing retailers suspending new production orders with factories in Myanmar in the wake of February’s military coup.

Myanmar has been rocked by protests since the army overthrew the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1 citing unsubstantiated claims of fraud in a November election.

At least 536 civilians have been killed in protests, 141 of them on Saturday, the bloodiest day of the unrest, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

Myanmar is known globally for its yarn, fabric and textile products, and its garment industry is a key source of jobs.

“We’re not placing any more orders at the moment, that is a big step,” CEO Simon Wolfson told Reuters after Next reported annual results.

“We don’t source a lot of our product from Myanmar but most of the stock that we were sourcing from Myanmar...we have alternatives in place already for that stock in other countries.”

Next's orders previously going to Myanmar have now been split between Bangladesh, Cambodia and China.

Wolfson said Myanmar provided less than 5% of Next's total stock.

On Wednesday, Associated British Foods said its Primark fashion business had paused orders in Myanmar, following similar moves from Sweden's H&M, the world's second-biggest fashion retailer, and Italy's Benetton Group.

On Monday Italian clothing retailer OVS said it would keep its "limited presence" in Myanmar but would stop its business with suppliers acting in a discriminatory way towards workers involved in rallies against the country's junta.

Britain's Marks & Spencer said it is continuing with its booked orders but keeping future orders under review.

Separately on Thursday, Britain sanctioned a Myanmar conglomerate for its close links to the military leadership which Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said was wantonly killing innocent people including children. (Reporting by James Davey; editing by David Evans)