

# Primark pauses placing new orders in Myanmar

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Primark has today become the latest clothing retailer to suspend new production orders in Myanmar in the wake of last month's military coup.

"Primark have now paused new orders in Myanmar," a spokesman for the retailer's owner, London-listed Associated British Foods, said.

The reimposition of military rule in Myanmar on February 1 after a decade of tentative steps towards democracy has triggered unrelenting opposition.

At least 521 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.

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

Primark, which trades as Penneys here, imports a small proportion of its clothing from Myanmar, sourcing from 21 sites.

In total the group sources from 1,018 factories in 28 countries, with China its biggest supplier.

Primark's decision follows similar moves from Sweden's H&M, the world's second-biggest fashion retailer, and Italy's Benetton Group, who earlier this month announced the suspension of new orders from Myanmar.

Italian clothing retailer OVS said this week it would keep its "limited presence" in Myanmar.

But it added that it would stop its business with suppliers acting in a discriminatory way towards workers involved in rallies against the country's junta.

Last week Britain imposed sanctions on the business interests of Myanmar's military.