

Human Rights Assessment

Resolved: Shareholders urge the Board of Directors to commission an independent, third-party assessment of Amazon's adherence to its stated commitment to workers' freedom of association and collective bargaining rights as outlined in Amazon's Global Human Rights Principles, which explicitly reference the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organization and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The assessment should address management non-interference when employees exercise their right to form or join a trade union as well as steps to remedy any practices inconsistent with Amazon's stated commitments. The assessment, prepared at reasonable expense and omitting confidential, proprietary or legally privileged information, should be publicly disclosed on Amazon's website by November 30, 2023.

Supporting Statement:

Amazon states, "we respect and support the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organization and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work" and says it respects workers' right to join or form a union "without fear of reprisal, intimidation, or harassment,"¹ an important recognition that the fulfilment of these rights is conditioned by how employers choose to respond to union organizing efforts.

According to the ILO, "freedom of association refers to the right of workers [...] to create and join organizations of their choice freely and without fear of reprisal or interference" and collective bargaining "allows workers to negotiate their working conditions freely with their employers."

For years, Amazon has faced overwhelming negative media coverage² in the US and internationally³ accusing the company of interfering with workers' exercise of their rights through anti-unionization tactics⁴ including allegations of intimidation⁵, retaliation⁶ and surveillance⁷. On multiple occasions, US regulators and courts have ruled that Amazon violated labor laws and ordered remedies, including rerun union elections⁸, the reinstatement of terminated workers⁹, and an order to cease and desist discharging workers in retaliation for union organizing.¹⁰

¹ <https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/governance/amazon-global-human-rights-principles>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html>

³ <https://novaramedia.com/2022/10/18/inside-the-fight-for-the-uks-first-formal-amazon-warehouse-strike/>;
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/sep/30/trade-unions-urge-eu-to-investigate-amazon-effort-to-spy-on-workers>

⁴ <https://pressprogress.ca/amazons-anti-union-tactics-around-the-world-show-what-canadian-warehouse-workers-are-up-against/>

⁵ <https://nypost.com/2021/04/19/amazon-used-illegal-intimidation-tactics-in-ala-vote-union/>

⁶ <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/fired-interrogated-disciplined-amazon-warehouse-organizers-allege-year-retaliation-n1262367>

⁷ <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/10/24/how-amazon-prevents-unions-by-surveilling-employee-activism.html>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/29/business/amazon-bessemer-alabama-election.html>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/18/business/amazon-protest-firing-ruling.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.nlrb.gov/news-outreach/news-story/nlrb-region-29-wins-federal-court-order-requiring-amazon-to-cease-and>

In response to investor concerns, Amazon published a report on its human rights commitment in 2022¹¹ which details Amazon's approach to these fundamental rights. While this report references both ILO conventions, it fails to explain whether and how Amazon's human rights policies and practices align with these international standards or its own commitments.

The apparent misalignment between Amazon's commitment and its reported conduct represents reputational and operational risks and may negatively impact Amazon's long-term performance. A respect to human rights can create a motivated workforce that provides management with critical and timely information that helps to reduce workplace accidents, improve training, and boost employee morale and corporate culture, thus boosting productivity and ultimately shareholder value.¹²

An independent assessment would help investors assess Amazon's adherence to its human rights commitments.

¹¹ <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/policy-news-views/amazons-human-rights-commitment-policy-and-practice>

¹² <https://www.ipa-involve.com/involvement-and-productivity-the-missing-piece-of-the-puzzle; https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12662>