

Time to stop clothing industry decline

According to Renato Palmi, director of The ReDress Consultancy, the South African clothing industry needs to take a stand against fake apparel after another textile company has shed 100 jobs and R50 million's worth of fake clothing was found in Durban.

The illegal imports consisted of Bafana Bafana soccer shirts, adidas pants, Daniel Hechter shirts and Uzzi jeans. "I understand from SARS that it is up to the brand owners to take legal action. Do they? Or do these operators who are destroying South Africa's clothing, textile and fashion sector just get fines," asks Palmi.

"We at consultancy feel it is important to name and shame these operators and to trace the value-chain. Where is the destination of these items? Do they end up in the informal sector or in retail? Where do they originate? We need to know the names and geographical locations of these companies that are producing these items and stop them from doing so.

More consumer education needed

"For the syndicates of illegal apparel imports, it's all a numbers game, they just calculate potential loss. One crate will be found but how many get through customs and end up on the backs of consumers?

The consultancy firmly believes that there should be more consumer education from the dti, SARS, the police and industry. It has lost count of how many times the issue and concern about illegal clothing imports has been discussed by the clothing and textile sector. Yes, they are talking and working with government but they should be more proactive as a collective. The South African clothing, textiles workers union (SACTWU) needs to take the lead as well. Stop complaining and do something active.

Palmi suggests that the industry uses platforms like the consultancy to get information out into the public space, develop consumer information booklets and take action.