

# UNIQLO Parent to Sue Shoplifters for Full Compensation

万引き対策として、ユニクロを展開するファーストリテイリングが「損害の全額を請求する方針」を発表し、注目を集めています。実は、全国の万引き被害額は年間で数千億円とも言われ、組織的な犯行も問題になっています。企業はどう向き合うべきなのでしょう。さまざまな事例をもとに、一緒に考えてみましょう。



## 1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

In response to a series of shoplifting incidents involving groups of foreign nationals, Fast Retailing, the parent company of clothing giant UNIQLO, announced a new policy this month. The company will seek full compensation for damages through civil procedures against identified shoplifters.

Shoplifting has become increasingly common at retail stores across Japan, particularly drugstores. Estimated annual losses exceed ¥300 billion JPY (about \$2.09 billion USD). While it remains rare for companies to pursue compensation, industry groups believe Fast Retailing's move may encourage more businesses to follow suit.

Continued on next page.

# 1. Article

## UNIQLO Shoplifting

In 2024, three Vietnamese women in their 30s and 40s were arrested by Osaka Prefectural Police for shoplifting clothing from a UNIQLO store. They reportedly said they were rewarded for stealing specific items and that the thefts helped cover their living expenses.

Investigations revealed they had traveled repeatedly between Japan and Vietnam under the direction of individuals in Vietnam. They received payments of ¥170,000 to ¥210,000 (about \$1200–1500) per trip.

Their thefts were confirmed at 37 UNIQLO stores across four prefectures, including Osaka, Hyogo, and Tokyo. Total damages reached approximately ¥12.3 million. One woman said the earnings were enough to live on for nearly three months.

Organized shoplifting by Vietnamese nationals has been the focus of repeated crackdowns in Japan. In February 2024, Fukuoka Prefectural Police arrested four Vietnamese men and women in connection with thefts causing an estimated ¥20 million (about \$140,000) in losses at UNIQLO stores in eight prefectures. According to the National Police Agency, Vietnamese nationals have accounted for roughly 50% to 70% of foreign nationals arrested for shoplifting in recent years.

## Countermeasures

Fast Retailing, which operates about 790 UNIQLO stores nationwide, announced on June 9 that it will step up its shoplifting countermeasures. The company said it will not only report cases to police and pursue criminal charges but also file civil suits.

These suits will seek to recover the cost of stolen goods and associated damages. "We will take a firm stance to create a store environment where customers can shop with peace of mind," the company emphasized.

Continued on next page.

# 1. Article

Despite the scale of losses, few retailers currently seek compensation from shoplifters. According to the National Shoplifting Prevention Organization, a Tokyo-based NPO with around 160 member companies including Fast Retailing, estimated nationwide shoplifting losses total around ¥346 billion annually. Yet, a 2024 survey by the organization found that only 10.9% (29 companies) of companies had sought compensation. This is a slight increase from 8.8% (28 companies) in a similar survey from 2010.

## Low Awareness

The organization's Secretary-General, Takayoshi Domon, noted that despite the enormous financial impact, social awareness of shoplifting as a serious problem remains low, even among retailers. One reason for the low rate of compensation claims, he said, is that many companies are either unaware of the procedures or find them too burdensome.

Fast Retailing declined to disclose specific figures on the number of shoplifting incidents, total damages, or its "unknown loss rate." This term refers to inventory discrepancies that cannot be clearly explained.

However, the company stated that it has been implementing countermeasures for several years. These include retraining staff and installing security cameras. While these efforts have led to notable improvements, Fast Retailing decided to strengthen its civil response due to ongoing theft incidents.

## Unknown Loss

A 2024 fact-finding survey by the National Shoplifting Prevention Organization found that among companies reporting unknown loss, the estimated causes were: shoplifting (41.4%), management errors (38.0%), and employee theft (2.7%).

Domon said Fast Retailing's approach could set a precedent, and compensation claims "are likely to become more common in the future." He added that the organization plans to "offer consultation and support for companies interested in pursuing compensation."

Continued on next page.

# 1. Article

## Deterrent Effect

One company that has long pursued shoplifting compensation is Sanyodo Holdings. The Nagoya-based bookstore chain operates around 65 locations primarily in the Tokai region. Each store prominently displays notices about its compensation policy. According to the company, this approach has significantly reduced its unknown loss rate.

Sanyodo began seeking compensation from shoplifters two decades ago. Claims cover not only the value of stolen goods, often discarded after recovery, but also personnel costs, including the time staff spend dealing with police. "Even when we catch a shoplifter, our employees can be detained for hours. We charge for that time down to the minute," a company representative explained.

In fiscal year 2024, Sanyodo filed 87 compensation claims totaling about ¥6.21 million (about \$40,000). Of those, 75 were successfully recovered, yielding approximately ¥5.74 million (\$40,000), including over ¥820,000 (\$6,000) in personnel costs. Each year, the company donates the recovered personnel cost portion to the National Shoplifting Prevention Organization to support broader anti-theft efforts.

Before adopting its compensation policy, Sanyodo's unknown loss rate was around 1.1%. After two decades, it has fallen to the 0.5% range for books. This shows clear evidence of the policy's deterrent effect. Store managers are also required to earn a private-sector certification known as the "Loss Prevention Specialist." As the representative noted, "To become a store manager, you must acquire the know-how to file compensation claims."

## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

### 1. shoplifting 万引き

The store installed more cameras to reduce shoplifting during busy hours.

### 2. compensation 賠償、補償

She received compensation for the damage caused by the airline.

### 3. accounted for (割合などを) 占める、説明する

Tourists from Asia accounted for 60% of the visitors to the museum.

### 4. discrepancy 相違、不一致、食い違い

There was a discrepancy between the report and the actual numbers.

### 5. yield もたらす、生み出す (利益・結果など)

The new marketing strategy yielded better results than expected.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Who was arrested for shoplifting at UNIQLO in 2024?
2. How many UNIQLO stores were affected by the thefts?
3. What is one reason many companies don't claim compensation for shoplifting?
4. In what situations do you think it is important for companies to demand compensation from shoplifters?
5. If you were a store manager, what would you do to prevent shoplifting?



## 4. 外国人の集団万引横行、ユニクロが示した「断固たる姿勢」 全ての損害に賠償請求表明

外国人グループなどによる万引事件が相次ぐ状況を受け、衣料品チェーン「ユニクロ」などを展開するファーストリテイリングは今月、特定した万引犯に対し、全ての損害を民事手続きで賠償請求する方針を明らかにした。万引は全国のドラッグストアなどでも多発し、年間被害額は推定で3千億円超。被害企業が賠償請求するケースはまだ少ないが、今回の動きを受け、業界団体は「賠償請求する企業は増えていく」との見方を示す。

「指定された商品を盗めば報酬がもらえた」「生活費のためだった」

大阪市内のユニクロ店舗で衣料品を万引したなどとして、大阪府警が昨年逮捕したベトナム国籍の30～40代の女3人は、こう供述したという。

3人はベトナム国内の人物からの指示で日本とベトナムを行き来し、1回の渡航で報酬として17万～21万円を得ていた。万引行為は大阪や兵庫、東京など4都府県のユニクロで37件確認され、被害総額は計約1230万円。「3カ月近く生活できるお金が手に入った」とも供述したという。

ベトナム人による集団万引を巡っては、ユニクロ店舗を中心に8都府県で総額約2千万円の被害を確認したとして昨年2月、福岡県警が男女4人を逮捕したと発表するなど、各地で摘発が相次ぐ。警察庁のまとめによると、近年は全国で万引で摘発された外国人のうち5～7割ほどをベトナム人が占める。

### 裁判も辞さず

こうした状況を受け、全国でユニクロ約790店舗などを展開するファーストリテイリングは今月9日、万引行為への対策を強化すると公表。警察への被害届や刑事告訴だけでなく、盗まれた商品や関連する全ての損害について、窃盗犯側に裁判を含む民事手続きで請求すると明らかにした。同社は「安心して買い物ができる店舗環境を整えるため、断固たる姿勢で臨む」としている。

次頁に続く

## 4. 外国人の集団万引横行、ユニクロが示した「断固たる姿勢」 全ての損害に賠償請求表明

同社を含む約160社・団体が加盟し、万引対策に取り組むNPO法人「全国万引犯罪防止機構」（東京）によると、全国の万引被害額は推計で年間約3460億円だが、万引被害で賠償を請求する企業は少ない。機構の実態調査によると、「賠償請求をしている」と答えた企業は令和6年調査でわずか10・9%（29社）。平成22年の調査でも8・8%（28社）とほぼ変わっていない。

同機構の土門敬佳（たかよし）事務局長は「膨大な被害にも関わらず、小売業者も含め、万引被害に対する社会的な問題意識はまだまだ低い」と指摘。賠償請求が少ない理由について「請求手続きが周知されていなかったり、手間であると考える企業が多いことも一因」とする。

### 「今後増える」

ファーストリテイリングの広報担当者は、万引の被害件数や被害額、万引被害を含む商品の「不明ロス率」は公表できないとしつつ、数年前からスタッフの再教育や防犯カメラ設置などの対策を進め、「状況はずいぶん改善された」と説明。それでも続く万引被害に「撲滅に向けたさらなるステップ」として、民事手続きの強化に踏み切ったと明かす。

機構の土門事務局長は万引が多発する現状から、同社のような賠償請求が「今後増えてくると思われる」とし、機構としても「賠償請求の相談やサポートをしていきたい」としている。

### 「分単位の人件費まで請求」賠償請求20年続ける書店チェーン

万引犯への賠償請求を長年実施してきたのが、東海地方を中心に書店約65店舗などを展開する「三洋堂ホールディングス」（名古屋市）だ。各店には賠償請求を告知するポスターを掲示。請求の導入により万引被害を含む商品の「不明ロス」は大幅に減ったという。

同社によると、万引犯に対する賠償請求は20年前から実施。請求対象は回収後に廃棄される被害品の実費に加え、警察での事件処理などに要した人件費も含まれる。同社の担当者は「確保した万引犯を警察に連れて行っても、従業員は数時間拘束される。そのコストも分単位で万引犯に請求している」と強調する。

次頁に続く

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同社のまとめでは、令和6年度の万引に関する賠償請求は87件、計約621万円。回収できたのは75件、約574万円で、このうち人件費部分は計82万円余りだ。同社は毎年、回収した人件費については「万引対策に広く役立ててほしい」として、同社も加盟する全国万引犯罪防止機構に寄贈しているという。

賠償請求を導入する前は、商品の不明ロス率が1・1%前後だったが、導入から20年を経てロス率は書籍で0・5%台となるなど、抑止効果が出ているという。同社では各店長にロス対策に関する同機構の民間資格「ロス対策士」を取得させ、「店長になれば賠償請求のノウハウを身につけなければならないようにしている」（担当者）という。