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# STATEMENT ON THE EXISTENCE OF FORCED LABOUR IN THE UYGHUR HOMELAND

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Dutch Uyghur Human Rights Foundation

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The Dutch Uyghur Human Rights Foundation urges governments, corporate brands and retailers, and civil society groups to take all possible measures to put an end to the Chinese government's continued policy of inflicting forced labour conditions on Uyghur people. Such acts are in complete and utter violation of China's own Constitution and her international obligations.

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Recent studies by various international think tanks and research groups have presented mounting evidence that Uyghurs, some as young as 15 or 16, are being sent to the so-called re-education camps in the occupied Uyghur homeland, the so-called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Various experts have described these camps as centers carrying out religious persecution and political indoctrination reflecting a textbook example of systematic and state sponsored genocide. As a part of this ethnic cleansing Uyghur detainees are moved in segregated modes of transport to factories in remote parts of China against their wishes to work in horrific and degrading conditions in state sponsored factories where they are subjected to degrading and humiliating treatments.

As per a study by Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the following acts are reflective of practices consistent with International Labour Organisation's definition of forced labour and are in complete violation of the basic human rights of Uyghurs:

1. Being continuously threatened or intimidated with arbitrary detention and remaining under constant scrutiny of security personnel and surveillance by digital means;
2. Being placed in a position of dependency and vulnerability, such as by threats to family members back home;
3. Restrictions on freedom of movement, such as by fenced-in factories and high-tech surveillance methods like GPS positioning bracelet;
4. Isolation, such as living in segregated dormitories and being transported in dedicated trains;
5. Abusive working conditions, such as political indoctrination, police guard posts in factories, military-style management, and curbing religious practices, such as being forced to consume pork;
6. Excessive hours, such as after-work Mandarin language classes and political indoctrination sessions that are part of job assignments.<sup>1</sup>

We additionally submit that the following practices are also taking place in the region:

7. Instances of buying and selling of Uyghur workers which points towards the existence of conditions akin to slavery.
8. Rapes of female Uyghur workers by factory owners, or even being forced into prostitution in the inner Chinese region.
9. Uyghur male workers being forced to have sex with Chinese females, which is recorded by government agents and forwarded to their families, in an attempt to destroy Uyghur families.

The Chinese Constitution mandates the Government to respect and preserve the human rights of all citizens. Also, Article 38 of the Constitution of China guarantees personal dignity to all its citizens including the Uyghurs. Additionally, China has ratified various international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the

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<sup>1</sup> "Uyghurs for sale", <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/uyghurs-sale>

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United Nations Convention Against Torture and Cruel and Inhumane Treatment. Thus China is bound by its domestic law and by the International conventions that it has ratified to put an immediate end to the abusive practice of extorting forced labour from its Uyghur citizens.

The Australian Research Policy Institute also identified 82 foreign and Chinese companies directly or indirectly benefiting from the use of Uyghur workers in these abusive factories: Abercrombie & Fitch, Acer, Adidas, Alstom, Amazon, Apple, ASUS, BAIC Motor, BMW, Bombardier, Bosch, BYD, Calvin Klein, Candy, Carter's, Cerruti 1881, Changan Automobile, Cisco, CRRC, Dell, Electrolux, Fila, Founder Group, GAC Group (automobiles), Gap, Geely Auto, General Motors, Google, Goertek, H&M, Haier, Hart Schaffner Marx, Hisense, Hitachi, HP, HTC, Huawei, iFlyTek, Jack & Jones, Jaguar, Japan Display Inc., L.L.Bean, Lacoste, Land Rover, Lenovo, LG, Li-Ning, Marks & Spencer, Mayor, Meizu, Mercedes-Benz, MG, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Mitsumi, Nike, Nintendo, Nokia, Oculus, Oppo, Panasonic, Polo Ralph Lauren, Puma, Roewe, SAIC Motor, Samsung, SGMW, Sharp, Siemens, Skechers, Sony, TDK, Tommy Hilfiger, Toshiba, Tsinghua Tongfang, Uniqlo, Victoria's Secret, Vivo, Volkswagen, Xiaomi, Zara, Zegna, ZTE. We urge these companies to reassess their relations with these factories and pressurise the Chinese government to put an end to its abusive labour practices.

We welcome the adoption of the recent Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act by the Congress of the United States of America and we urge more governments in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world to adopt similar legislation to curb China's persecution of the Uyghurs.

We take this opportunity to alert the entire international community that instances of forced labour along with various other acts taking place in the Uyghur region such as forceful sterilisation of Uyghur women, ban on religious and cultural symbols, torture and sexual violence are reflective of crimes against humanity, if not state sponsored genocide. If swift action is not taken it will result in complete destruction of the Uyghur people and their cultural existence. We are counting on you to proceed swiftly.