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# CBP Issues Region-Wide Withhold Release Order on Products Made by Slave Labor in Xinjiang

**Release Date:** January 13, 2021

**WASHINGTON** — Effective January 13 at all U.S. ports of entry, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will detain cotton products and tomato products produced in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

CBP issued a Withhold Release Order (WRO) against cotton products and tomato products produced in Xinjiang based on information that reasonably indicates the use of detainee or prison labor and situations of forced labor. The agency identified the following **forced labor indicators** ([https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS\\_203832/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang--en/index.htm)) through the course of its investigation: debt bondage, restriction of movement, isolation, intimidation and threats, withholding of wages, and abusive living and working conditions.

“DHS will not tolerate forced labor of any kind in U.S. supply chains. We will continue to protect the American people and investigate credible allegations of forced labor, we will prevent goods made by forced labor from entering our country, and we demand the Chinese close their camps and stop their human rights violations,” said Acting DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli.

“CBP will not tolerate the Chinese government's exploitation of modern slavery to import goods into the United States below fair market value,” said CBP Acting Commissioner Mark A. Morgan. “Imports made on the cheap by using forced labor hurt American businesses that respect human rights and also expose unsuspecting consumers to unethical purchases.”



This WRO will direct CBP personnel at all U.S. ports of entry to detain cotton products and tomato products grown or produced by entities operating in Xinjiang. These products include apparel, textiles, tomato seeds, canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, and other goods made with cotton and tomatoes. Importers are responsible for ensuring the products they are attempting to import do not exploit forced labor at any point in their supply chain, including the production or harvesting of the raw material.

In July 2020, the U.S. Government issued an **advisory** (<https://www.state.gov/xinjiang-supply-chain-business-advisory/>) to caution businesses about the reputational, financial, and legal risks of forced labor in Xinjiang, where the Chinese government continues to execute a campaign of repression targeting the Uyghur people and other ethnic and religious minority groups. On December 2, 2020, CBP announced the issuance of a **WRO on cotton** (</newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-issues-detention-order-cotton-products-made-xinjiang-production>) and cotton products originating from the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, an economic and paramilitary organization subordinate to the Chinese Communist Party.

This is the fourth WRO that CBP has issued since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2021, and the second on products originating in Xinjiang. Eight of the 13 WRO that CBP issued in Fiscal Year 2020 were on goods made by forced labor in China. All WROs are publicly available and listed by country on CBP's **Forced Labor WROs and Findings webpage** (</trade/programs-administration/forced-labor/withhold-release-orders-and-findings>).

Federal statute **19 U.S.C. 1307** (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title19/USCODE-2011-title19-chap4-subtitleII-partI-sec1307>) prohibits the importation of merchandise produced, wholly or in part, by convict labor, forced labor, and/or indentured labor, including forced or indentured child labor. CBP detains shipments of goods suspected of being imported in violation of this statute. Importers of detained shipments have the opportunity to export their shipments or demonstrate that the merchandise was not produced with forced labor.

CBP enforces the prohibition on importing goods made by forced labor. Any person or organization that has reason to believe merchandise produced with the use of forced labor is being, or likely to be, imported into the United States can report detailed allegations by contacting CBP through the **e-Allegations Online Trade Violation Reporting System** (<https://eallegations.cbp.gov/Home/Index2>) or by calling 1-800-BE-ALERT.

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*U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with securing the borders of the United States while enforcing hundreds of laws and facilitating lawful trade and travel.*

**Last modified:** January 13, 2021