

# UK Government announces business measures over Xinjiang human rights abuses

Today (12 January) the Foreign Secretary has announced a package of measures to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

Evidence of gross human rights violations including extra-judicial detention and forced labour has been growing, including proof from the Chinese authorities' own government documents. The UK Government has repeatedly called on China to end these practices, and uphold its national laws and international obligations.

The measures are designed to send a clear signal to China that these violations are unacceptable.

The UK Government is announcing a review into which UK products can be exported to Xinjiang and the introduction of financial penalties for businesses that do not comply with the Modern Slavery Act. Further measures include increasing support for UK public bodies to exclude businesses complicit in human rights violations from their supply chains. Together these measures will help UK organisations ensure that they are not contributing to the abuse of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Coordinated international action is needed to address the risk of forced labour entering global supply chains, and the UK is working closely with its partners on this issue. Today, Canada will make a parallel announcement of measures to help ensure Canadian businesses are not complicit in forced labour in Xinjiang.

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The evidence of the scale and severity of the human rights violations being perpetrated in Xinjiang against the Uyghur Muslims is now far reaching. Today we are announcing a range of new measures to send a clear message that these violations of human rights are unacceptable, and to safeguard UK businesses and public bodies from any involvement or linkage with them.

This package will help make sure that no British organisations, Government or private sector, deliberately or inadvertently, profit from or contribute to the human rights violations against the Uyghurs or other minorities in Xinjiang.

The Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Britain will always stand up for those suffering dreadful human rights abuses and today we are bringing forward measures which will help protect the minority populations in Xinjiang.

Businesses and public bodies must be more vigilant than ever before and ensure they are not inadvertently allowing forced labour in their supply chains.

The Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

These new measures demonstrate that we will not turn a blind eye nor tolerate complicity in the human rights abuses taking place in Xinjiang.

Forced labour, anywhere in the world, is unacceptable. This Government wants to work with businesses to support responsible practices, and ensure British consumers are not unwittingly buying products that support the cruelty we are witnessing against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Specifically, the measures include:

- A review of export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to ensure the Government is doing all it can to prevent the exports of goods that may contribute to human rights abuses in the region. This review will determine which additional specific products will be subject to export controls in future.
- The introduction of financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements, under the Modern Slavery Act.
- New, robust and detailed guidance to UK business setting out the specific risks faced by companies with links to Xinjiang and underlining the challenges of effective due diligence there.
- The Government will provide guidance and support for all UK public bodies to use public procurement rules to exclude suppliers where there is sufficient evidence of human rights violations in supply chains. Compliance will be mandatory for central government, non-departmental bodies and executive agencies
- A Minister led campaign of business engagement to reinforce the need for UK businesses to take action to address the risk.

The UK, working with partners including Canada, has led international action to hold China to account for their actions in Xinjiang, supported research which has built the evidence base for action, and urged UK business to conduct robust due diligence to ensure its supply chains are free of forced labour. The UK has led international joint statements on Xinjiang in the UN General Assembly Third Committee and the UN Human Rights Council, including bringing forward the latest statement which was supported by 39 countries, together with Germany, in October last year. The UK was also the first country to require companies by law to report on modern slavery in their

supply chains. Canada and the UK's approach will help to defend the rights of Uyghurs.