

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

[[DATE]]

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Re: Global Magnitsky Petition

Dear Secretaries Blinken and Yellen,

We urge the Departments of State and Treasury to immediately act to impose sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Global Magnitsky Act, Title XII, Subtitle F of P.L. 114-328; 22 U.S.C. §10101 et seq.) on Chinese entities in the seafood industry identified in the January 11, 2024 submission by the Outlaw Ocean Project in collaboration with a human rights non-governmental organization (NGO).¹ The submission provides credible allegations through multiple lines of evidence proving that six seafood suppliers and one labor recruitment company are “responsible for or complicit in, or have directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse.”

The seven entities implicated include Yantai Sanko Fisheries, Yantai Longwin Foods, The Chishan Group (including Shandong Haidu and Rongcheng Haibo), Shandong Meijia Group (including Rizhao Meijia Aquatic Foodstuff, Rizhao Jiayuan Foodstuff, and Rizhao Meijia Keyuan Foods), Qingdao Tianyuan Aquatic Foodstuffs, Rongsense Group (including Rizhao Rirong Aquatic Products and Rizhao Rongxing), and Xinjiang Zhongtai Zhihui Modern Service.

On December 6, 2023, a similar petition was submitted in Canada by the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project and the Human Rights Action Group, urging Global Affairs Canada to impose sanctions on these seven Chinese entities.² The Global Magnitsky Sanctions recommendation follows these actions and serves as a step in the right direction for the U.S. in preventing human rights violations.

The abuses described in the submission by the Outlaw Ocean Project in collaboration with a human rights NGO are part of a larger pattern of behavior by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which continues to commit genocide against China’s Uyghur population. The CCP has repeatedly committed human rights abuses against the Uyghur population, including mass arbitrary detention, torture, forced sterilization, cultural and religious persecution, political indoctrination, and forced labor. The U.S. enacted the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act

¹ Reported on here: https://theoutlawocean.substack.com/p/legal-petition-to-treasury-department?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=240142&post_id=140589996&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=1pff7v&utm_medium=email

² <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ottawa-china-seafood-uyghur-labour/>

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

(UFLPA) in 2021 to prevent the import of goods tied to Uyghur forced labor, specifically targeting goods originating in the Xinjiang region.

However, Uyghur and other minorities are “transferred” out of Xinjiang to other regions of China to work in various industries. In recent years, thousands of Uyghurs from Xinjiang have been transferred to work in Shandong’s seafood processing plants, filling labor shortages that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CCP has worked with the entities listed in the petition to recruit and use Uyghur forced labor within their companies. Social media posts document Uyghur forced labor in the seafood supply chain of the listed entities in this petition as recently as 2023, as outlined in the petition, as well as Outlaw Ocean Project’s recent published reporting in the New Yorker and online.

The recommendations for sanctions also come after a number of legal proceedings in order to hold accountable those who were included in the reporting of the Outlaw Ocean Project. Two legal petitions were filed requesting the issuance of Withhold Release Orders (WROs) to prevent the entry of any squid linked to Chinese distant water fishing vessels discovered through an Outlaw Ocean Project investigation were submitted to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) by November 2023.

The submission by the Outlaw Ocean Project in collaboration with a human rights NGO provides credible evidence documenting the prevalence of seafood linked to forced labor in U.S. markets. Disturbingly, the entities listed in the petition hold contracts with major grocery retailers, food providers, and the U.S. government, including supplying U.S. schools and government facilities with seafood linked to forced labor.

We urge the Departments of State and Treasury to impose sanctions on the companies and their affiliates named in the petition referenced above, preventing them from selling products derived from Uyghur forced labor in the U.S. Approving this petition will reiterate the U.S.’s commitment to preventing the import of goods manufactured with Uyghur forced labor and disincentivize and penalize inhumane labor practices and human rights abuses.

[[CLOSING]]

[[SIGNATURES]]