



20 YEARS OF

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23 Apr 2024

Story

S. Korea: Retailers remove imported seafood products after report reveals North Korean forced labour allegedly used in Chinese seafood plants



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In February 2024, the Outlaw Ocean Project in collaboration with the New Yorker reported that seafood-processing plants in China have employed more than a thousand North Korean workers since 2017. The report contained workers' descriptions of being held in compounds under watch of security agents, working long hours every day, getting only one day off a month, and being beaten and sexually harassed by managers sent by North Korea.

In April 2024, The ChosunIlbo in collaboration with the Outlaw Ocean Project reported that around 420 tons of seafood processed by Chinese seafood companies identified to employ North Korean workers were imported to South Korea between 2020 and 2022. Specifically, ChosunIlbo's report included the names of five companies -- Dalian Haiqing Food, Dandong Taifeng Foodstuff, Donggang Luyuan Food, Dandong Taihua Food, and Dandong Omeca Food. Dalian Haiqing Food in January 2024 [responded](#) to the Outlaw Ocean Project that "Dalian Haiqing Foods does not employ overseas North Korean workers". The other four companies did not respond to the Outlaw Ocean Project.

The imported products were distributed throughout the country by major retailers such as E-mart, Lotte Mart, Coupang, and Market Kurly. Following ChosunIlbo's reporting, Lotte Mart, Coupang, and Market Kurly announced that they will stop selling the products from Chinese seafood companies related to North Korean forced labor. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre requested a response from E-mart; it did not respond.

Company Responses

E-mart
No Response

Timeline

- 23 Apr 2024** **E-mart did not respond** →
Company Response
- 10 Apr 2024** **S. Korea: Coupang & Lotte Mart to stop selling Chinese seafood allegedly produced using North Korean forced labour** →
Article
- 10 Apr 2024** **S. Korea: Market Kurly to stop selling Chinese seafood allegedly produced using North Korean forced labour** →
Article
- 9 Apr 2024** **S. Korea: Seafood allegedly processed using North Korean forced labour in Chinese factories sold in major supermarkets** →
Article
- 25 Feb 2024** **In China, North Korean workers in seafood plants supplying to US market reportedly subject to forced labour** →
Article



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