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U.S. takes bold action against forced labor

NF by NF Staff in News, Gulf & South Atlantic

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Another Chinese seafood processing plant operating in Shandong province was added to the Entity List maintained under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Photo courtesy of chinahbzyg on Shutterstock

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In a groundbreaking announcement, the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF) added Shandong Meijia Group Co., Ltd. (also known as Rizhao Meijia Group), a Chinese seafood processing plant operating in Shandong province, to the *Entity List* maintained under the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act* (UFLPA). The action means that any seafood exported by any company within the Shandong Meijia Group Co., Ltd. will be presumed by the federal government to be produced through forced labor and, therefore, prohibited from entering the United States.

Earlier this year, [the Southern Shrimp Alliance](#) petitioned the FLETF to add eight Chinese seafood processing plants, including the Shandong Meijia Group along with its subsidiaries, Rizhao Jiayuan Food Co. and Rizhao Meijia Keyuan Food Co., to the UFLPA's *Entity List*. Two of the subsidiary members of the Shandong Meijia Group – Rizhao Meijia Aquatic Foodstuff Co. and Rizhao Meijia Keyuan Food Co. – are active exporters of Argentine red shrimp to customers in the United States and Canada.

In support of its request to the FLETF, the Southern Shrimp Alliance observed that at least 12 million pounds of Argentine red shrimp processed in China were exported to the United States in 2023. This wild-caught shrimp was sold as sushi in restaurants and in retail grocery stores across the United States without any indication that it may have been packed in Chinese seafood processing plants using Uyghur labor. These shipments have continued in 2024, with publicly available ship manifest information indicating that Rizhao Meijia Aquatic Foodstuff Co. exported Argentine red shrimp to the United States earlier this year. Ship manifest data also indicates that Rizhao Meijia Keyuan Food Co. exported coldwater shrimp (*pandalus borealis*) to the United States this year as well.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance's request for the addition of Chinese seafood processors to the UFLPA's *Entity List* followed an investigation by *The Outlaw Ocean Project*, which extensively documented the forced relocation of members of the Uyghur minority from the landlocked Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) to the coastal province of Shandong, where they were coerced to work in seafood processing plants. The forced workers packed a wide variety of seafood products, including shrimp, for export.

With this welcome first step to address forced labor in the Chinese seafood processing supply chain, the Southern Shrimp Alliance continues to urge the FLETF to prioritize seafood in UFLPA enforcement through a "priority sector" designation.

"The U.S. shrimp industry applauds the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force's decisive action against the exploitation of the Uyghur people in Chinese seafood processing plants," said John Williams, the executive director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. "The Southern Shrimp Alliance remains committed to countering forced labor in shrimp supply chains wherever it is found, and we look forward to future action by this Administration to ensure that American consumers are not unintentionally supporting modern slavery."

To read more about the pre-publication Federal Register notice announcing the addition of Shandong Meijia Group Co., Ltd. (also known as Rizhao Meijia Group) to the UFLPA's Entity List, [click here.](#)

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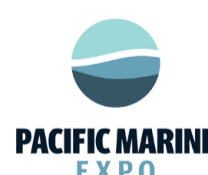
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