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PREMIUM

## US lawmakers call on Biden administration to impose Magnitsky sanctions against Chinese companies

By Chris Chase  
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A group of U.S. lawmakers has called on U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen to impose Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (GloMag) sanctions on Chinese companies named in the October 2023 Outlaw Ocean Project report on forced labor in Chinese processing facilities.

U.S. representatives Jared Huffman, Mike Gallagher, Raul Grijalva, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Betty McCollum, James

Moylan, Josh Gottheimer, Jill Tokuda, Marry Peltola, Julia Brownley, and Delia Ramirez all signed the letter, which urged the executive branch of the federal government to impose sanctions on the Chinese companies.

“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, which continues to commit genocide against China’s Uyghur population,” their letter stated.

The Outlaw Ocean Project report [revealed strong evidence](#) that members of the Uyghur ethnic minority were forced to work in a number of Chinese seafood processing facilities making products later sold in the U.S.

The letter follows a [formal filing by an NGO](#) calling for the federal government to impose GloMag sanctions against the companies, citing the Outlaw Ocean report. The NGO, which requested anonymity to protect its team of activists, [confirmed the filing to SeafoodSource](#) in early January, and by law, the U.S. government is required to consider credible information presented by an NGO.

In their separate requests, both the U.S. elected officials and the NGO called for GloMag sanctions against Yantai Sanko Fisheries; Yantai Longwin Foods; the Chishan Group, which includes Shandong Haidu and Rongcheng Haibo; the Shandong Meijia Group, which includes Rizhao Meijia Aquatic Foodstuff, Rizhao Jiayuan Foodstuff, and Rizhao Meijia Kayuan Foods; Qingdao Tianyuan Aquatic Foodstuffs; the Rongsense Group, including Rizhao Rirong Aquatic Products and Rizhao Rongxing; and Xinjiang Zhongtai Zhihui Modern Service.

The lawmakers’ letter said the credible allegations in the report prove the seafood suppliers are complicit in human rights abuses – leaving them open to GloMag sanctions.

“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,” the letter stated. “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.”

Hundreds of North American and European food companies were listed by the Outlaw Ocean Project as having Chinese forced labor in their seafood supply chains. In response, [multiple U.S. seafood companies](#) have [cut ties](#) with the [Chinese firms](#) implicated in the report.

The letter sent by the U.S. representatives also emphasized the [withhold release order petitions filed](#) against two of the Chinese vessels also named as committing labor abuses in the Outlaw Ocean report.

“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,” their letter said.

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