

U.S. Blacklists Chinese Seafood Factory for Using Uyghur Labor



Workers in 2023 at a seafood plant called Yantai Sanko Fisheries in Shandong Province, China, which allegedly relies on Uyghur and other labor from Xinjiang (Douyin / Outlaw Ocean Project)

PUBLISHED JUN 11, 2024 7:20 PM BY THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

Following a high-profile media investigation of labor abuses in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has blacklisted a Shandong-based seafood company that allegedly uses oppressed ethnic minority groups for labor, one of several suspicious Chinese fish-processing firms that were [identified](#) by The Outlaw Ocean Project last year.

Shandong Meijia Group (also known as Rizhao Meijia Group) is a seafood company based in Shandong Province, China. It is a processor and exporter of frozen seafood products, vegetables, frozen meals, and other foodstuffs for Western consumers. DHS has concluded that Shandong Meijia has participated in the Chinese government's labor transfer programs to move and receive workers from persecuted groups - like Uighurs, Kazakhs or Kyrgyz - from Xinjiang to its factory complex in Shandong.

"Shrimp supply chains have a disturbing pattern of profiting off of the globe's most vulnerable populations. Argentinian red shrimp packed by Uyghurs in Chinese seafood processing plants should not be competing with wholesome products in American grocery stores," said John Williams, executive director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. "The Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force's initiative to counter forced labor in seafood supply chains sends a strong message to U.S. seafood importers that chasing lower costs and higher margins cannot replace ethical and legal obligations."

China operates an extensive and well-documented system of forced labor and political reeducation for Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang, which began with prison camp complexes within the province and now extends to labor transfers to other parts of China. The U.S. government bans imports of products believed to be produced by this involuntary labor system.

"It's a strategy of control and assimilation, and it's designed to eliminate Uyghur culture," said Adrian Zenz, an anthropologist who studies the Xinjiang internment program, speaking to The Outlaw Ocean last year.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance has called for heightened scrutiny of many other plants in Shandong that could potentially be using Uyghur labor, like Qingdao Yize Food, Rizhao Ronxing Co. and Rongcheng Sanyue Foodstuff. The alliance has filed a formal complaint against Qingdao Yize, and has recommended banning seafood imports from China until they are proven to be free from abusive labor practices.

The Outlaw Ocean has identified a much longer list of Chinese seafood plants that may be using labor from Xinjiang, and DHS says that it is investigating these other entities as well.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Print Digital Newsletter Renew

Subscribe Now

ABOUT US ADVERTISE NEWSLETTER CONTACT US PRIVACY POLICY SITE MAP

NEWS

Piracy News

FEATURES

Shipbuilding News

PODCASTS

Cruise Ship News

MAGAZINE

Ports News

NEWSLETTER

Salvage News

JOBS

Training News

Government News

Environment News

Corporate News

SUBSCRIBE

The MARITIME EXECUTIVE

