

UK retailers, suppliers cut ties with Chinese processors alleged to have used Uyghur laborers

By Cliff White

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U.K. retailer Iceland and supplier Fastnet Fish have cut ties with a Chinese processor alleged to have employed Uyghur workers, deemed by the U.S. government to be the victims of forced labor.

Iceland Foods, which operates around 900 supermarkets in the U.K., said it had cut ties with Shandong Meijia Group, one of the biggest seafood processing companies in China, which was [accused in a recent report](#) – along with eight other Chinese seafood companies – of using what U.S. law defines as forced Uyghur labor.

The [Outlaw Ocean report](#) found seafood factories in China's Shandong province employed at least 2,000 Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities from Xinjiang province, and [a subsequent Sky News report](#) found ties between those firms and U.K. seafood suppliers.

A customer list posted by Shandong Meijia included Iceland and U.K. distributors Fastnet Fish and Westbridge Foods. But Iceland said it was no longer doing business with the firm.

"We can confirm that Iceland is not, nor has not for a significant period, received any products from such sites," a spokesperson told Sky News. "It is Iceland's policy to be able to act responsibly in all commercial and trading activities to establish that the working conditions of people working for, and within the supply chain, meet relevant international standards."

Asked by Sky News about why it decided to cut ties with Shandong Meijia, the spokesperson did not elaborate. Shandong Meijia did not respond to Sky News's request for comment.

Grimsby, U.K.-based frozen seafood supplier Fastnet Fish said it had dropped the Chinese company as a result of the investigation. Malvern, U.K.-based Westbridge Foods, a poultry specialist offering some seafood products, did not respond to Sky News's request for comment.

Customers of another accused Chinese firm, the Chishan Group, include U.K. supermarket chain Sainsbury's and Warminster, U.K.-based Lyons Seafoods, a subsidiary of Maremne, France-headquartered Labeyrie Fine Foods.

Lyons did not respond to Sky News's request for comment, but Labeyrie responded to an Outlaw Ocean inquiry by saying it is "extremely concerned" by the allegations.

A Sainsbury's spokesperson told Sky News it was investigating the report's findings.

"All of our suppliers have to meet our high ethical and worker welfare standards," the spokesperson said. "If we have any reason to believe there is a situation within our supply chains which is in breach of those standards we take immediate action. We are working together with our suppliers and wider industry partners to understand the situation and take the most responsible and appropriate next steps."

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