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The Human Trafficking Legal Center Applauds U.S. Enforcement Action Targeting Rubber Gloves Made with Forced Labor in Malaysia

Washington, D.C. — The Human Trafficking Legal Center welcomes today’s [announcement](#) of a Finding by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) against Top Glove Corporation Bhd (Top Glove) over the use of forced labor in its Malaysian factories. The announcement brings attention to a little used, but important authority vested in CBP to seize goods made using forced labor at U.S. borders. Anasuya Syam, Human Rights and Trade Policy Advisor at the Human Trafficking Legal Center, said, “We applaud this enforcement action. We believe that the United States must close the borders to companies that tolerate forced labor in their supply chains. There can be no safe harbor for forced labor.”

A Finding signifies that CBP was able to determine conclusively, based on available evidence, that forced labor persists in Top Glove factories in Malaysia. The announcement today follows an eight-month investigation by CBP into forced labor conditions in Top Glove’s factories under the U.S. Tariff Act. In July 2020, CBP issued a [detention order](#) blocking entry into the United States of rubber gloves from Top Glove. CBP based this determination on the legal standard under the statute: reasonable, but not conclusive, proof of forced labor. A Finding elevates the determination from reasonable suspicion to conclusive proof of forced labor. Syam said, “With this Finding, rubber glove imports from Top Glove can now be seized and forfeited by CBP, and not just detained at the border.”

The Finding against Top Glove is significant for many reasons. It is only the second issued in recent years, and only the eighth since passage of the Tariff Act in 1930. The last Finding was against a [Chinese stevia manufacturer](#) for using prison labor in the processing of stevia imported into the United States. In that case, CBP also issued a penalty of \$575,000 USD against a [U.S. stevia importer](#) for importing 20 shipments of stevia from the sanctioned Chinese stevia manufacturer. Syam said, “We have long encouraged CBP to levy fines against importers. These fines should be hefty, far higher than \$575,000. And the funds should be used to create an emergency fund to support workers who have lost their jobs due to CBP import bans.”

American importers that continue to source rubber gloves tainted by forced labor should expect to face similar fines. In a recent Senate Finance Committee [hearing](#), the Human Trafficking Legal Center [urged](#) CBP to issue more Findings for forced labor under the U.S. Tariff Act. According to Syam, “Findings send a clear message to companies that using forced labor in their

supply chains will be met with serious legal and financial consequences.” Goods covered by a Finding cannot be re-exported to another country.

Companies can no longer hide behind opaque supply chains. The Human Trafficking Legal Center applauds CBP for holding companies -- here in the United States and abroad -- accountable for the use of forced and prison labor. Syam said, “Only with increased enforcement and accountability will forced labor be eradicated from global supply chains.”

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About the Human Trafficking Legal Center

Human trafficking is a human rights violation spanning the globe. Trafficking survivors who escape their traffickers face tremendous challenges. The Human Trafficking Legal Center connects trafficking survivors with quality pro bono representation so they can seek justice and thrive. We are a bridge to justice. We demand accountability from traffickers, from governments, and from corporations. We shine a light on the system failures that allow trafficking to flourish. We advocate for survivors as agents of change and as leaders in the movement. We fight for systems change to end forced labor, including forced labor in global supply chains. Learn more at www.htlegalcenter.org. Follow the Human Trafficking Legal Center on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).