

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Leading US retail and fashion trade organizations issue statement on forced labor in supply chains

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Leading industry lobbies for fashion and retail are taking a stand on forced labor even as trade is increasingly global. Image credit: U.S. Fashion Industry Association

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The United States Fashion Industry Association, along with four other retail bodies, has issued a joint statement on how member companies are doing their best to avoid use of forced labor in the supply chain.

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The U.S. government and Congress have taken steps to isolate China over its treatment of Uyghurs in their home province of Xinjiang and the alleged use of forced labor. These associations, that include the [National Retail Federation](#), [RILA](#), [FDRA](#) and [AAFA](#) as well as the [United States Fashion Industry Association](#), are drawing a line in the sand.

"We again urge our nation's leaders to immediately establish a multi-stakeholder working group to develop and deploy a collective approach that accurately assesses the problem, identifies constructive solutions to increase transparency, and protects both the rights of workers and the integrity of global supply chains," the statement said.

Here is the statement in its entirety:

Our member companies have long maintained policies and compliance programs that seek to prevent, identify, and mitigate instances of forced labor.

As an industry representing thousands of brands and retailers, ensuring that forced labor does not exist in our supply chains is a key priority.

Following today's launch of the NGO Call to Action, the recent publication of several new reports, the signing into law of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, and the release of a business advisory by the U.S. State, Treasury, Homeland Security, and Commerce Departments regarding supply chain risk in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), we want to reiterate our continued focus on identifying and eradicating forced labor.

A successful solution for all involved, above all the workers themselves, will require state-to-state engagement and

collaborative partnerships across government, industry, labor advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders.

We again urge our nation's leaders to immediately establish a multi-stakeholder working group to develop and deploy a collective approach that accurately assesses the problem, identifies constructive solutions to increase transparency, and protects both the rights of workers and the integrity of global supply chains.

Following the publication of early reports, in alignment with our zero tolerance for forced labor, our associations and others joined forces as part of a multi-industry program to use our collective efforts to address the situation.

Building on work the associations and member brands had already done separately, we have spent the last eight months working together to address due diligence challenges and opportunities.

Since coming together, we have implemented a broad-based effort, convening with a wide variety of stakeholders, including NGOs, labor groups, and policy makers in all branches of government.

In these meetings, we have highlighted public reporting on the region, shared our industry's decades of work on due diligence and remedy, reiterated our zero tolerance approach to forced labor, and called for unified action by relevant stakeholders to find the best way forward.

We are and will continue to be committed to working with all key stakeholders on this critically important human rights issue.

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