

Top Glove restates commitment to good labour practices

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Top Glove says it's looking forward to receiving pertinent information and working with the CBP to quickly resolve the issue of forced labour. (AP pic)

PETALING JAYA: Top Glove Corp Bhd today restated its commitment to good labour practices, following allegations of forced labour at its production facilities.

This comes after the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said it had found "sufficient information" that certain products by Top Glove were manufactured with the use of convict, forced or indentured labour.

"Today's forced labour finding is the result of a months-long CBP investigation aimed at preventing goods made by modern slavery from entering US commerce," said Troy Miller, a senior official performing the duties of the CBP commissioner.

"CBP will not tolerate foreign companies' exploitation of vulnerable workers to sell cheap, unethically-made goods to American consumers."

Following the announcement, CBP has directed personnel at all US ports of entry to begin seizing disposable gloves produced by Top Glove.

The glove maker said it is currently reviewing CBP's news release, and its lawyers in the US are liaising with CBP's representatives for sufficient information to meaningfully address the issuance of the recent finding.

"We look forward to receiving pertinent information and working with the CBP to quickly resolve the matter," it said in a statement today.

Further, Top Glove said that Impact, an independent consultant it hired to monitor the ongoing implementation of its "corrective action plans" and other remedial steps, found no evidence of "systemic forced labour" as of January.

"Top Glove understands the concerns of all our stakeholders, including CBP, to ensure that forced labour is not present in the manufacturing of gloves and personal protective equipment. This is the company's shared top priority, and it seeks to resolve any ongoing areas of concern immediately.

"Accordingly, the company continues to take extensive remedial actions to further improve our practices and enhance our internal control measures with regard to our labour management.

"We are committed to being the best company that we can be, ensuring high-quality welfare, health, safe working conditions, and living accommodation for our workforce," the company said.

In July last year, the CBP issued the order on the basis of forced labour concerns against Top Glove and its subsidiary TG Medical Sdn Bhd, and as a result detained shipments of the company's products at ports of entry.

Among the multiple forced labour indicators which were found to have existed in Top Glove's production process, according to the order, were debt bondage, excessive overtime, abusive working and living conditions, and retention of identity documents.

Top Glove has 60 companies within its group and exports to more than 195 countries.

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