

MALAYSIA

Last 5 forced labour indicators to be resolved soon, says Top Glove

Significant improvements made since last October, says executive director Lim Cheong Guan

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Top Glove executive director Lim Cheong Guan says Top Glove had completed its plan to relocate workers' accommodation in December. – File pic, April 8, 2021

BY

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KUALA LUMPUR – The remaining five International Labour Organisation forced labour indicators will soon be met in a bid by Top Glove Corp Bhd to lift the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) import ban on certain rubber-based products made in Malaysian factories.

Top Glove executive director Lim Cheong Guan said the company has yet to meet five out of the total 11 indicators but has made significant improvements on them since last October.

The indicator goals are aimed at resolving deception, debt bondage, retention of identity, physical and sexual violence, and intimidation.

Another key indicator is abusive working and living conditions.

“We have made significant improvements in remediating the 11 indicators,” he said during a virtual press conference today.

More than a week ago, shipments of certain rubber-based products by Top Glove **was seized by the US** after CBP announced it had found that certain products by the glovemaker were manufactured with the use of convict, forced, or indentured labour.

In a notice published on March 29, the US agency stated that certain disposable gloves had been “mined, produced, or manufactured in Malaysia by Top Glove Corp Bhd with the use of convict, forced or indentured labour, and are being, or are likely to be, imported into the US”.

Lim said the current retention of documents are in relation to some Indonesian workers who made up for less than 1% of the total workforce and involved agents in Indonesia that have not returned their identity documents.

“We have contacted and requested the agents to return the documents to the workers immediately.”

He said the deception indicator that needed to be rectified was in relation to advertisement or promises made by recruitment agents to the workers during the recruitment process.

“To overcome it, we have come up with a recruitment advertising policy, and included the basic salary as well in the undertaking of recruitment in terms. We will also provide upfront payment for the recruited candidates. We've incorporated this into recruitment on April 5.”

In terms of debt bondage, Lim said this involved recruitment fees, and that Top Glove has started to pay monthly remediation fees since last August while the balance in monthly instalments are supposed to end in July this year.

However, he said Top Glove has made a lump sum payment on April 2 to immediately resolve the issue.

“Next on the issue of physical, sexual violence, and intimidation, we have enhanced the harassment policy, prevention of bullying at workplaces, procedures, and social media policies.

“The action required now is to educate and create awareness among the employees of both the workers and staff as well.”

On the improvement of workers' living conditions, he said Top Glove had completed its plan to relocate workers accommodation in December.

“We have made big improvements since December 2020, including renting more houses and apartments with all the house items required by the Labour Department.” – The Vibes, April 8, 2021

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