

Marks & Spencer's response

19 March 2020

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited Marks & Spencer to respond to the following item:

- ""Uyghurs for sale: 'Re-education', forced labour and surveillance beyond Xinjiang", 1 March 2020, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI): https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2020-03/Uyghurs%20for%20sale_Final.pdf

Marks & Spencer sent the following response:

"As an ethical and responsible retailer, the conditions of workers in our supply chain are of the utmost importance to us. All direct suppliers must adhere to our Global Sourcing Principles (GSP). Within these principles we insist that the people working for our suppliers are to be treated with respect, and their health, safety and basic human rights must be protected and promoted.

Each supplier must comply with all relevant local and national laws and regulations and its obligations in the principles. The GSP also state that suppliers must apply these principles at all times and must also be able to demonstrate that they are doing so. We always work with suppliers to support any necessary improvements, but we will also take action, if suppliers are not prepared to make appropriate changes.

M&S does not source from Youngor Textile Holdings Co. Ltd., nor the Youngor's Xinjiang company as claimed.

We are aware of this issue in the China supply chain and the movement of Uyghur people from the region across China to provide labour in manufacturing facilitates. As part of our annual audit process we identify the demographics of all workers in our manufacturing sites and as due diligence we have also been conducting additional assessments with our suppliers to identify if there is any employment of Uyghur people.

We remain committed to upholding international labour standards and assessing potential risks that may be posed to these individuals. In line with our Global Sourcing Principles (GSP) specifically, we have requirements that all work must be conducted on a voluntary basis and the right of workers to terminate their employment be upheld.

We are committed to collaborating with other brands, stakeholders, supplier partners and expert organisations to responsibly address situations of potential forced labour."