



The Rt Hon Lord Cameron
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP
Secretary of State for Business and Trade
Department for Business and Trade

Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Dear Secretaries of State,

We write to raise our concerns over the use of systemic state-imposed forced labour of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim-majority peoples in industries critical to the clean energy transition. We are particularly concerned over the exposure of the UK solar industry to human rights abuses occurring in the Uyghur Region. We propose three measures to address these concerns and advance the Government's pursuit of a just transition to clean energy:

1. The introduction of import controls to insulate our market from all goods made wholly or partially with forced labour.
2. Complementary measures to enable the diversification of solar and other clean energy industry supply chains.
3. Targeted sanctions to bar offending solar companies from operating in the UK.

Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim-majority peoples in the Uyghur Region have been subjected to crimes against humanity committed by the Peoples Republic of China including arbitrary detention, forced sterilisation programmes, political 're-education', abduction and indoctrination of children and mass forced labour. The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 2022 found the nature and extent of powers exercised over the ethnic groups in the Uyghur Region may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity. These policies underpin a campaign by the Chinese Communist Party to destroy Uyghur language, culture, and society. The House of Commons unanimously voted in April 2021 to declare the situation a genocide.

Industries key to the clean energy transition are particularly dependent on systemic state-imposed forced labour, with the solar industry representing an acute example of supply chain dependency. Sheffield Hallam University's reports 'In Broad Daylight' (2021) and 'Over-Exposed' (2023) document the extent to which the solar industry relies on raw materials from the Uyghur Region. Currently 89% of polysilicon, a key component of solar panels, is sourced from China, with an estimated 35% produced in the Uyghur Region. Solar companies also use lithium-ion in batteries that store solar energy. As of December 2022, China produced 60% of the world's lithium. The percentage of lithium refining, which is a process that precedes lithium production, is also growing in the Uyghur Region.



The UK's international partners have already acted to tackle this issue. The US passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in 2021, which bans goods made in whole or in part in the Uyghur Region on the presumption they have been made with forced labour. Silica based goods, in particular solar panels, have been prioritised for enforcement. Likewise, in September 2022, the EU Commission announced a proposal to ban all goods imported into and traded within the EU market which have been produced with forced labour. An import ban for goods made with forced labour is in place in Canada and Mexico and there are efforts towards their introduction by NGOs and parliamentarians in Australia with specific provisions made for goods made with Uyghur forced labour.

The UK is quickly becoming a global outlier in tackling Uyghur forced labour in supply chains and will become even more isolated once the proposed EU regulation comes into force. We are fast becoming a dumping ground for products made wholly or partially with forced labour, particularly in clean energy industries such as solar. The US has seized thousands of solar imports since June 2022. The UK is yet to seize a single solar import, ever.

Therefore, we are calling on the Government to urgently implement import controls to block any materials or goods made wholly or partially with forced labour. The Government must also introduce measures which will enable diversification of solar supply chains. This should include the use of development finance and other financial incentives to develop alternative supplies of materials.

Furthermore, we would urge the Government to sanction the worst offending companies and bar them from building key national infrastructure projects in the UK. Companies such as Canadian Solar have well-documented links to forced labour yet are currently applicants in nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) planning proposals. This is unacceptable and there should be a mechanism to bar companies who benefit from systemic state-imposed forced labour from being awarded lucrative contracts and development rights.

The green transition is vital and urgent, but it must not be built on the back of forced labour and genocide. As the world legislates to insulate their markets from goods made by forced labour, the UK is fast becoming a dumping ground for those same goods. We must act now, introduce import controls, diversify our supply chains, and sanction those companies most implicated in benefitting from and contributing to these abuses.

We would be grateful for a meeting to discuss these proposals further.

Signed,

Alicia Kearns MP
Member of Parliament for
Rutland and Melton
Chair of the Foreign Affairs
Committee

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Member of Parliament for
Birmingham, Hodge Hill
Chair of the Business and Trade
Committee

Angus MacNeil MP
Member of Parliament for
Na h-Eileanan an Iar and
Chair of the Energy Security
and Net Zero Committee

Sarah Champion MP
Member of Parliament for
Rotherham, Chair of the
International Development
Committee

Robert Buckland MP
Member of Parliament for South
Swindon, Chair of the Northern
Ireland Affairs Committee

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
Member of Parliament for
Chingford and Woodford
Green



Rt Hon Ian Blackford MP
Member of Parliament for
Ross, Skye and Lochaber

Caroline Lucas MP
Member of Parliament for
Brighton Pavilion

**Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge
MP**
Member of Parliament for
Barking

**Rt Hon Desmond Swayne
MP**
Member of Parliament for
New Forest West

Elliot Colburn MP
Member of Parliament for
Carshalton and Wallington

Rt Hon Sir John Hayes MP
Member of Parliament for
South Holland and The
Deepings

Helen Morgan MP
Member of Parliament for
North Shropshire

Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP
Member of Parliament for
Gainsborough

James Grundy MP
Member of Parliament for
Leigh

Jason McCartney MP
Member of Parliament for
Colne Valley

John Penrose MP
Member of Parliament for
Weston-super-Mare

Khalid Mahmood MP
Member of Parliament for
Birmingham Perry Barr

Kirsten Oswald MP
Member of Parliament for
East Renfrewshire

Layla Moran MP
Member of Parliament for
Oxford West and Abingdon

Marie Rimmer MP
Member of Parliament for St
Helens South and Whiston

Nadia Whittome MP
Member of Parliament for
Nottingham East

Patricia Gibson MP
Member of Parliament for North
Ayrshire and Arran

Paula Barker MP
Member of Parliament for
Liverpool Wavertree

Philippa Whitford MP
Member of Parliament for
Central Ayrshire

Rachael Maskell MP
Member of Parliament for York
Central

Richard Thompson MP
Member of Parliament for
Gordon

Brendan O'Hara MP
Member of Parliament
Argyll and Bute

Alex Sobel MP
Member of Parliament for Leeds
North West

Sarah Owen MP
Member of Parliament for
Luton North

Simon Fell MP
Member of Parliament for
Barrow and Furness

Greg Smith MP
Member of Parliament for
Buckingham

Stewart McDonald MP
Member of Parliament for
Glasgow South

Virenda Sharma MP
Member of Parliament for
Ealing, Southall

Wera Hobhouse MP
Member of Parliament for Bath

Crispin Blunt MP
Member of Parliament for
Reigate

Alison Thewliss MP
Member of Parliament for
Glasgow Central

Bob Seely MP
Member of Parliament Isle of
Wight

Wendy Chamberlain MP
Member of Parliament for
North East Fife

Afzal Khan MP
Member of Parliament for
Manchester, Gorton

David Jones MP
Member of Parliament for Clwyd
West

Sarah Green MP
Member of Parliament for
Chesham and Amersham



Daisy Cooper MP
Member of Parliament for St
Albans

Dame Sara Thornton,
Former UK Independent Anti-
Slavery Commissioner

Anti-Slavery International

Forum for Human Rights

Be Slavery Free

Environmental Justice
Foundation

Global Labor Justice-
International Labour Rights
Forum

The Human Trafficking Legal
Centre

Investor Alliance for Human
Rights

Campaign for Uyghurs

Corporate Accountability Lab

Free Uyghur Now

Freedom United

Global Legal Action Network

Stop Uyghur Genocide

Stolen Dreams

SupplyESChange

Unseen

Jewish World Watch

Justice and Care

Motthida Chin, LLC

No Business with Genocide

Uyghur American Association

Jewish Movement for Uyghur
Freedom

World Uyghur Congress

Fashion Roundtable

Norwegian Uyghur Committee

Rene Cassin, the Jewish
Voice for Human Rights

Uyghur Association of Victoria,
Australia

Victims of Communism
Memorial Foundation

Dutch Uyghur Human Rights
Foundation

Australian Uyghur Tangritagh
Women's Association

Montreal Institute for
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Studies