

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations



FORCED LABOR PROGRAM

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Forced Labor Program coordinates investigations into allegations of forced labor (to include forced child labor) relating either to the manufacturing or production of goods overseas that are exported to the United States, or, labor here in the United States that results from coercion, debt bondage/indentured labor, or other non-voluntary means of forcing an individual to provide work or a service.



HSI resources are available both at HSI Headquarters and at HSI offices around the world to assist HSI domestic offices with forced labor investigations needing information or collateral investigations. Products manufactured or produced with forced or indentured labor may not differ in appearance from products made by legitimate labor. Forced labor may be found as a result of trafficking or worksite investigations (e.g., sex workers, indentured labor at factories), or involve children or adults being forced to provide labor or sexual services, or simply due to cultural norms that are practiced in countries around the world (such as individuals being leased or sold into indentured servitude or made to work as a result of the debt bondage of their families). ICE cooperates with the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, and State, as well as with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to share information and participate in efforts to combat forced labor. In addition, the ICE Forced Labor Program meets frequently with non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations with an interest in this area, as well as with individual corporations and trade associations, to strategize about ways to work together to end forced labor worldwide.

The ICE Forced Labor Program is committed to identifying importers and consignees that are seeking to illegally import merchandise into the United States in violation of 19 U.S.C. § 1307, which prohibits the importation of goods produced by convict, forced or indentured labor under penal sanction, including forced or indentured child labor, or in violation of the North Korean labor provisions of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (2017). U.S. importers, consignees, and criminal organizations may be subject to criminal prosecution, and the seizure and forfeiture of their merchandise, if found to be involved in using forced labor to produce goods being imported into the United States.



Forced child labor is a particularly heinous issue, as international standards severely restrict the work that a child (defined, in most cases, as an individual under the age of 15 years of age) may perform. Forced labor investigations often require coordination with other US Government agencies and departments, as well as with non-government organizations and victim assistance personnel. To report information on forced labor situations, please email ICE.ForcedLabor@ice.dhs.gov.

