

EXPERT: CBP SHOULD ACT ON OTHER COMPANIES TOO, TOP GLOVE IMPROVED A LOT

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THE US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) should also take action against other companies and industry players who engage in forced labour practices.

“There are companies out there doing worse than Top Glove Corporation Bhd (Top Glove) but little action is taken against them.

“The CBP must take note of this. As for Top Glove, they have made a lot of improvements over the years,” migrant worker rights specialist Andy Hall said in a webinar earlier today organised by Top Glove.

Also present were Top Glove’s executive chairman Tan Sri Lim Wee Chai, executive director Lim Cheong Guan and managing director Datuk Lee Kim Meow.

Last week, the CBP started seizing the company's glove products after it was found engaging in forced labour practices.

The CPB Office of Trade, after consulting its Treasury Secretary, published forced labour findings report against disposable gloves produced by Top Glove in the Customs Bulletin and in the Federal Register.

“We have sufficient information to believe that Top Glove uses forced labour in the production of disposable gloves. Merchandise covered by the forced labour finding is subject to seizure upon arrival at a US port of entry.

“The finding is the result of a months-long CBP investigation aimed at preventing goods made by modern slavery from entering US commerce,” said Senior Official Performing the Duties of the CBP Commissioner Troy Miller.

Moving forward

However, Top Glove defended itself saying that an independent audit by UK based- Impactt Limited (Impactt) on the establishment found no evidence of forced labour practices there.

Two days ago, CBP stopped seizing the company's disposable gloves, pursuant to the Withhold Release Order (WRO) as both parties were in talks to resolve the matter.

Touching on the matter, Lee opined that Top Glove was under heavier public scrutiny due to its position as the world's largest glove maker to date.

“So, we receive more attention than others. As what Hall had said, cases of forced labour happen in various industries and companies across the globe but we respect CBP’s intentions and will continue making improvements,” he stated.

Lee added that using the improvements made, Top Glove hoped that other companies will follow suit and make the necessary adjustments to meet global standards.

On how CBP action has affected Top Glove, Lee said that the company has stopped shipping personal protective equipment (PPE) to the US for the time being, as they were doing all they can do comply with CBP’s requirements.

On how much losses Top Glove suffered due to CBP’s action, Lee told FocusM that his team has not assessed the figures yet.

“What is important now is moving forward. The US is an important market for us and we are doing our best to pass their 11 indicators on forced labour,” he remarked. – *April 8, 2021.*