



Joint Committee on Human Rights

Committee Office · House of Commons · London · SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 4710 Email JCHR@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk



From the Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights

Jonathan Reynolds MP

Secretary of State for Business and Trade

[Delivered by Email]

13 June 2025

Dear Mr Reynolds,

Forced Labour in UK Supply Chains: Further Questions

Thank you for helpful and detailed letter of late May. As we conclude our inquiry, it would be very helpful if you could assist the Committee further by letting us have the answer to these follow-up questions:

1. When will the Government report on its engagement and review with international partners, where the effectivity of import bans and other measures to tackle forced labour have been explored?
2. What processes are in place to ensure that chapters and provisions to ensure labour standards and workers' rights in Free Trade Agreements are put into effect?

Sanctions:

3. What are the other levers you refer to when you say, "Our sanctions are most effective when used alongside other levers"? [in your letter to JCHR Committee of May 2025]

Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS):

4. Please explain what 'flexible rules of origin' are, and what are the implications for consumers and supply chain transparency? [practice noted in letter to JCHR Committee received 30 May 2025]
5. Has a country ever been suspended from Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) on the basis described ("if [the Government] finds that they have seriously and systemically breached international conventions in relation to human rights, labour rights")? How does the Government judge whether there has been a serious breach?

China:

6. Does the Government consider that in order to "stand firm on human rights in China, including the repression of people in Xinjiang, and will continue to hold China to account" it may be necessary to do more than raise concerns?



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7. We note that the Government does comment publicly on the detail of discussions with international counterparts. If not the detail, could the Department please provide an overview of the response and any assurances Minister Alexander may have received when he raised the UK's concerns over human rights abuses including Xinjiang?

Please send us your reply by 26 June at the very latest, to allow us to produce our report on schedule. I do appreciate this is a demanding timetable. Thank you again for your continued engagement with the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights



David Alton.