

Information for Magen Avot members about companies associated with Uyghur forced labour in China.

“Forced labour is such an integral part of the government’s plan for total control that all products coming from the Uyghur Region, from cotton to solar panels, must be assumed to be tainted by forced and prison labour”. (Nury Turkel, Chairman of the Board, Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2019)

The following information has been provided to us by Rene Cassin, a charitable human rights NGO that works to promote and protect universal human rights, drawing on Jewish experiences and values.

The points below are specifically about Adidas, Puma and Volkswagen. This is a fraction of the multinational corporations which source goods from factories said to be using Uyghur forced labour. We are also distributing letter templates for anyone who wishes to write to the CEOs of the companies. We have included VW, Adidas and Zara. Zara is part of a group of over 70 apparel companies all complicit in involvement with Uyghur forced labour either in their supply chains or having presence in Xinjiang region. You can see the full list on the website for the Coalition to End Uyghur Forced Labour, of which René Cassin is a member [Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region \(enduyghurforcedlabour.org\)](https://enduyghurforcedlabour.org)

Adidas/Puma

2022 Xinjiang (Uyghur Region):

- Recent reports have suggested more than half a million people from minority ethnic groups such as the Uyghurs have been coerced into picking cotton in Xinjiang, which provides more than 80% of China’s and a fifth of the global production of cotton.
- Researchers say they have found traces of Xinjiang cotton in shirts and T-shirts made by Adidas and Puma appearing to contradict the German clothing companies’ promises to revise their supply chains after allegations of widespread forced labour in the region.
- Puma stated in 2020 it had “no direct or indirect business relationship with any manufacturer in Xinjiang”, while Adidas said the same year it had no contractual relationship with any Xinjiang supplier but had instructed its fabric suppliers not to source yarn from the region in the wake of reports about human rights violations.
- However, researchers at the Agroisolab in Jülich and the Hochschule Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, both in western Germany, say an isotope analysis has found traces of Xinjiang cotton in Puma and Adidas T-shirts,
- In one case, a batch of “graduates” from a so-called vocational training centre in south Xinjiang were transferred directly to a factory in the eastern Anhui province, according to a government report. The factory, Haoyuanpeng Clothing Manufacturing Co. Ltd (HYP), lists Adidas and Puma among its clients.

Volkswagon

- Volkswagen has been operating in the People’s Republic of China since 1984 and today has 33 plants across China. It has three Joint Ventures with Chinese motor corporations with varying degrees of ownership (between 25%-50%).
- In 2012 VW set up a plant in Urumqi, the heart of the Uyghur Region, as an equal Joint Venture with the state-owned company Shanghai Motor Corporation (SAIC) (part of the state-driven Great Western Development Strategy). The plant has 600 workers and produces up to 20,000 vehicles a year.
- According to the Chinese Automotive Associations (CAAM), when referring to VW, the contract demands "patriotic education" and "military training" for the employees. VW does not deny the existence of this agreement but stated that there has been no military training. There is other evidence for high level Chinese government involvement in VW’s activities in China e.g. Chinese officials must have offices in each factory.
- In 2020, the company's CEO Group in China, Stephan Wollenstein, defended Volkswagen's presence in Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi "what happened in the Nazi times was something that happened in our factories where we had forced labour, people producing Volkswagen cars," he said, "This certainly is an unacceptable situation. Therefore, we are making sure that none of our production sites have forced labour, and this is something that we specifically checked in Urumqi and I can assure you, we do not have forced labour."
- But when asked whether he could be absolutely certain of that claim and give an assurance that none of the Urumqi workforce - of which around 25% is made up of Uyghurs and other minorities - had been in a camp, Dr Wollenstein said he could not.
- Additionally, a Volkswagen display and component supplier – Hefei Highbroad Advanced Material Co. Ltd (possibly under subsidiaries Hefei Fuying Photoelectric Co. Ltd or BOE Technology Group Co. Ltd) - is using thousands of Uyghur forced laborers in their factories as a part of their “poverty alleviation” programmes.