

[Fashion brands 'can't rule out' links to Uighur forced labour](#)

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Byline: Laura Onita

Body

BIG-NAME retailers such as H&M and Stella McCartney say that, despite their best efforts, they cannot guarantee they are not profiting from Uighur **forced labour** in China to make their wares.

H&M, the second-largest fashion retailer in the world, said that due to the complexity of the global supply chain "from farm level, via ginners, to spinners of yarn, fabric production and finally manufacturing, there is, today, no solution available to fully trace the origin of cotton used in final products".

Stella McCartney, which takes pride in its sustainability credentials, said the traceability of certain raw materials, such as cotton, "is extremely difficult to gain".

They made the remarks in the leadup to an inquiry into **forced labour**. The business select committee will quiz witnesses from Boohoo, H&M, TikTok, The North Face and Nike to find how the industry can avoid profiting, however unwittingly, from the misery of Xinjiang's Muslim population.

The United States government estimates as many as three million Uighurs have been detained in the concentration camps of western China. The Xinjiang region is a key hub of Chinese cotton production.

Stella McCartney stated in a document to MPs: "Although we do not source directly from any organisations in the Xinjiang region ... we understand that a proportion of our cotton, including organic cotton, is sourced from China and as such we cannot completely rule out the possibility that a portion of it could be coming from Xinjiang - this is something we are actively investigating at this time, and discussing with our suppliers directly."

H&M added: "For reasons of quality and functionality, cotton from different regions or even countries is mixed along the supply chain."

The retailer, which also owns the COS and & Other Stories brands, said it hoped to come up with solutions with other retailers to help eradicate the practice.

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