



U.S. Immigration
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News Release

HSI, Grace Farms Foundation sign MOU to combat forced labor

Memorandum of understanding furthers DHS strategy to combat human trafficking and the importation of goods produced with forced labor.

WASHINGTON – Grace Farms Foundation and the agency’s Global Trade Investigations Division, part of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), announced a partnership Wednesday to advance their shared missions of disrupting and combating forced labor around the world.

The two entities signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which outlines how they will work together to share expertise through meetings and trainings. The goal will be to improve criminal investigations and communication networks that can lead to successful prosecutions of perpetrators engaged in labor trafficking.

HSI is committed to ensuring businesses and individuals profiting from forced labor are held accountable and liable, as these crimes are matters of criminal and civil law, not just questions of ethical conduct. At present, those benefiting directly and indirectly from engagement in forced labor activities may do so with seeming impunity, and those providing the labor are often without access to justice. U.S. laws do provide several far-reaching mechanisms to hold accountable those engaging in and benefiting from forced labor.

The HSI partnership with Grace Farms Foundation provides critical new opportunities to assist law enforcement as they develop new approaches and strategies to combat forced labor. Collaboration between HSI and Grace Farms Foundation allows experts to work with law enforcement and share data, knowledge and research that will improve transparency and access to justice for victims.

HSI’s programs focus on U.S.-bound supply chains whose goods are made wholly or in part by means of forced labor. Grace Farms Foundation’s Justice Initiative, which develops comprehensive strategies and partnerships to combat all forms of contemporary slavery through policy, training and advocacy work, is the primary focus of the collaboration with HSI.

“Forced labor is the most common element of modern slavery, and often affects the most vulnerable, excluded population groups in the world. Sadly, this type of exploitation spans across multiple industries and sectors and must be dismantled using a multifaceted approach,” said National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center Director Steve Francis. “With this new partnership, HSI’s broad legal authorities,

coupled with Grace Farms' vast capabilities, will help advance our mission to end this type of exploitation and bring justice to victims of forced labor, both locally and abroad."

"The public-private partnership is the most promising model for achieving substantive results in disrupting transnational organized crime syndicates involved in modern slavery, gender-based violence and wildlife trafficking," said Grace Farms Foundation's Chief Accountability Officer and Justice Initiative Director Rod Khattabi. "In partnering with HSI, a premier investigative agency, and its Global Trade Investigations Division, we will maximize our assets in achieving successful outcomes."

HSI is focused on the elimination of forced labor worldwide, using existing enforcement mechanisms and potential criminal prosecutions of U.S.-based firms benefitting from, or having knowledge of, forced labor in their supply chains, as a deterrent and unique enforcement opportunity in the world. By eliminating the financial draw of using forced labor, and any profit to be made by the exploitation of human beings to produce goods for market, HSI seeks to have a positive impact on reducing forced labor. Partnering with organizations like Grace Farms Foundation, with the ability to facilitate discussions and convene public, private, and government sectors, HSI seeks to gather information that will lead to successful prosecutions and significant steps being made in eliminating forced labor, and provide information to corporations looking for ethical, forced labor-free supply chains.



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