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20 Aug 2025
Terry Collingsworth, IRAdvocates

Article

USA: Tesla sued over alleged forced labour and greenwashing in cobalt supply chain

Glencore, Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM) (Joint venture between CMOC (80%) and Gecamines (20%)), Tesla, Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Co. Ltd., Congo Dongfang International Mining (CDM), ...

Mining, Automobile & other motor vehicles

Congo (the Democratic Republic of the), United States of America

Violence, Deaths, Torture & Ill-treatment, Workers/Employees, Death threats, ...



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“Human Rights Group Sues Tesla for Greenwashing and Consumer”, 20 August 2025

International Rights Advocates (IRAdvocates) filed a lawsuit

today against Tesla, Inc., accusing the company of deceiving consumers about the ethics and sustainability of its supply chain.

While Tesla promotes itself as an environmentally conscious and socially responsible leader in electric vehicles, the lawsuit alleges that the company relies on cobalt from suppliers deeply implicated in forced labor, corruption, and widespread environmental destruction in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

...According to the complaint, Tesla purchases cobalt from Glencore , one of the world’s most notorious mining companies. Glencore has faced criminal convictions in both the United States and Switzerland for bribery and money laundering. In the DRC, Glencore’s workers report exhausting shifts with little food or water and meager pay.

Local communities have suffered from poisoned air, water, and farmland. Security forces contracted by Glencore have been accused of shooting, torturing, and killing residents suspected — often wrongly — of artisanal mining.

Tesla also relies on Huayou Cobalt, a Chinese multinational whose subsidiary, Congo Dongfang International Mining SARL (CDM), operates artisanal mines and sources from large industrial projects such as Sicomines and Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM). These mines are notorious for forced labor, physical abuse of workers, and violent evictions. In 2024, TFM displaced approximately 2,500 residents living near its operations after pollution from its facilities killed dozens. Despite this record, Huayou blends cobalt from these suppliers during refining, funneling it directly into Tesla’s supply chain.

...Yet the reality exposed in the lawsuit paints a starkly different picture: Tesla continues to profit from supply chains steeped in human suffering and ecological devastation.

The case, filed under the D.C. Consumer Protection Procedures Act (CPPA), argues that Tesla’s public claims amount to deceptive and unfair business practices. The Act allows consumers to hold companies accountable for misrepresentations and misleading conduct, particularly when those misrepresentations impact the choices of consumers in the District of Columbia.

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