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Hyundai and Kia Just Got Sued Over Allegations of Child Labor in Their U.S. Supply Chain

Allegations of unsafe and abusive labor practices in Hyundai's supply chain question the brand's future.

Nov 18, 2025 12:45 PM EST

CAPITOL HYUNDAI IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA ADDED TO GROWING COLLECTION OF HYUNDAI TUCSON FUEL CELL DEALERS



By Anosh Khumbatta News Editor

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Key Points

JMA filed a lawsuit accusing Hyundai, Kia, and others of severe labor law violations.

Alleged abuses include coerced prison, child, and migrant labor, plus unsafe conditions in supply chains.

Hyundai and Kia deny all charges, asserting compliance with labor laws and safety standards.

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Lawsuit Against Hyundai and Kia Filed in California

Jobs to Move America (JMA), a prominent nonprofit that advocates for ethical labor practices and responsible public investment, has filed a landmark lawsuit against Hyundai, Kia, and other associated companies. The lawsuit alleges gross violations of California's labor laws, accuses the automakers of relying on deeply exploitative labor practices across their U.S. supply chain, and demands that the marketing and sale of Hyundai and Kia vehicles be ceased in the state.

The lawsuit, filed in the Los Angeles County Superior Court, names Hyundai Motor Company, Hyundai Motor America, Kia Corporation, Kia America, spare part and accessory vendor Hyundai Mobis, and logistics company Glovis America as defendants. This arrives on the back of a massive ICE raid at Hyundai's Georgia plant, with some of the deported South Korean workers only now returning to work.

The Allegations

JMA alleges that while the defendants furnish public-facing ethical credentials that support their claims to be socially responsible organizations, and use these credentials to secure public contracts from Californian agencies, they are hiding a darker truth. The lawsuit claims that the supply chains behind these organizations are engaged in severe labor exploitation in Alabama and Georgia.

The abusive, unethical, and illegal labor practices being employed are said to include the use of coerced prison labor, child labor, and migrant labor, as well as unsafe working conditions that have led to

preventable injuries and deaths. The lawsuit also demands independent audits, third-party monitoring, and long-term compliance verification.



Hyundai and Kia Respond

Both manufacturers have strongly denied the charges, with Hyundai calling the lawsuit “baseless” and asserting that it enforces strict safety and legal standards across its supplier network. Kia also issued a statement claiming that it only works with suppliers and service providers that comply fully with federal, state, and local labor laws and regulations.

Who Are JMA?

Jobs to Move America is a U.S. nonprofit policy and advocacy organization that works to ensure public infrastructure spending creates good jobs, strengthens worker rights, and benefits historically underserved communities. It researches how government contracts can support better wages and training, pushes for policies that tie public investment to equity and job quality, and organizes coalitions to negotiate community benefits agreements with employers.

About The Author

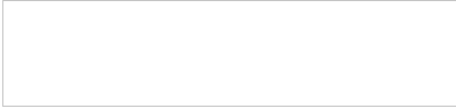


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Anosh Khumbatta is an automotive journalist with over a decade of experience covering cars and motorcycles. A former Senior Correspondent and Road Tester, he's conducted extensive performance testing on road and track, restored classic vehicles, and raced at the national level. He's contributed to Car India, Bike India, and other publications.

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