

UPDATE FROM THE UZBEK GERMAN FORUM

A CHRONICLE OF FORCED CHILD LABOUR: REPORTS FROM THE UZBEKISTAN COTTON HARVEST 2010

Issue 10, December 6, 2010

With this issue, we conclude our chronicle of forced child labour in Uzbekistan in 2010.

According to the results of this year's cotton campaign, we can conclude that neither the ratification of ILO nor the boycotts of the Uzbek cotton helped to change the situation for better. The Uzbek authorities as usual kept using the cheap labour of schoolchildren and students who had to pick cotton for two months instead of studying during the school term. This year students and schoolchildren were sent to cotton fields from the 10th of September and have stayed there until the 10th of November. Mobilisation of the students and children into work has taken place based on the orders of the administration of educational institutions, in their turn, they received orders from the local mayors' offices.

Like previous years, the workers were assigned with a daily target depending on their age group and it was between 30 to 60 kg a day. The payment for the work was 3 USD cents per kilo of cotton.

According to the reports of local monitors, after the return of schoolchildren to studies, approximately up to mid November the school administration forced pupils to bring 5-10 kg cotton to school. Based on the obtained information, this cotton was sold to those farmers who could not fulfil the yearly target quota of the harvest.

This year the local authorities took extra security measures in order to hide the information about the mobilisation of schoolchildren to cotton harvest. In some districts the teachers were instructed to report unknown people in the fields and the children were supposed to tell that they are working with their own will and helping their families.

By the end of the cotton season in Uzbekistan the price of the cotton in world market rose up to a record value which is 147 USD cents per pound. The Uzbek people are paying for the cotton with their own price which is life, health and low education level of youth in the country.



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Other resources and updates

Uzbekistan marks Holiday of Cotton

Hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers who have been involved in the cotton harvesting campaign in 2010 marked the Holiday of Cotton without holiday mood on the last Sunday of November in Uzbekistan. Along with schoolchildren, servicemen, students, doctors, teachers and other employees from state-run organizations take part in cotton harvesting each year in Uzbekistan. ...

Read more at http://www.uznews.net/news_single.php?lng=en&sub=hot&cid=4&nid=15772

Source: Uznews, 29.11.2010

Uzbekistan to Establish Direct and Guaranteed Supply of Cotton in Bangladesh in Exchange for Investments

From 7-11 of November, a delegation of the Bangladesh government, headed by the Trade Minister Farooq Khan, visited Uzbekistan. The foreign visitors and the Uzbek leadership discussed the creation of a direct channel for the delivery of raw cotton. ...

Read more at <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6817>

Source: Ferghana.ru, 29.11.2010

'Experts of the International Labour Organization should be permitted into Uzbekistan'

Markus Löning the high government official and the Human Rights Commissioner of Germany, demands Tashkent officials to permit the experts of the ILO to come to Uzbekistan to hold an investigation.

According to reports, the State Secretary of the United States Hillary Clinton who recently finished her official visit to Uzbekistan also raised the issue of child labour during talks with President Islam Karimov. ...

Read more at http://www.bbc.co.uk/uzbek/uzbekistan/2010/12/101204_cy_uzbekistan_rights.shtml

Source: BBC, 4.12.2010

Uzbeks Seek Closer UK Trade Ties

The Uzbek government will use an annual meeting with British officials to seek assistance for the agricultural sector, analysts say. The December 9th meeting of the Uzbek-British Trade and Industry Council will take place in the capital Tashkent. ...

Read more at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/uzbeks-seek-closer-uk-trade-ties>

Source: iwpr.net, 24.11.2010

EJF photo exhibition in Houses of Parliament exposes the continued use of forced child labour in Uzbekistan

With support from Alistair Carmichael, MP and fashion model Lily Cole, EJF's event and week-long photo exhibition highlights forced child labour in Uzbek cotton production, and calls for policy actions to resolve this problem. ...

Source: EJF, 29.11.2010

Download briefing: 'White Gold; Uzbekistan, slave nation for our cotton?'

Read more at http://www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/ejf_uzbek_harvest_WEB.pdf

<http://www.ejfoundation.org/page698.html>

More reading

FAQ: <http://www.cottoncampaign.org/frequently-asked-questions/>

Academic view of the subject: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/ccac/events/cotton-sector-in-central-asia-2005/file49842.pdf>

Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights, 2010, <http://www.uzbekgermanforum.org/>