

# They said we wouldn't have to pick and now they send us to the fields

Forced Labor in Uzbekistan's Cotton Harvest 2018

UGF



April, 2019



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**Allison Gill is the primary author of this report, based on research conducted by UGF**

**monitors during the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan 2018.**

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**On the Cover:**

**Cotton picker, Karakalpakstan, Xo'jayli district, September 12, 2018**

**Photo: Timur Karpov**

**The title of this report, “They said we wouldn’t have to pick and now they send us to the fields,” is a direct quote from Uzbek-German Forum interview with nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018**



**UGF is a Berlin-based NGO whose main activity is monitoring and Reporting on the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, as well as supporting local activists who work inside the country. The organization was founded and is led by the award-winning human rights activist, Umida Niyazova, who was forced to flee her native Uzbekistan in 2009 because of her human rights work.**

**For more information, please visit our web site: <http://uzbekgermanforum.org>**



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## Executive Summary

On September 26, 24-year-old Sohibjon Mutalibov, an employee of Ammofos-Maxam, one of the largest mineral fertilizer producers in Uzbekistan, was sent to pick cotton in the Dustlik district in the Jizzakh region. Ten days later, he died as a result of a fight with a local resident who fractured his skull. Mutalibov lay in a coma for seven days and died before ever regaining consciousness in a hospital in Dustlik.

In 2018 when the harvest began, Mutalibov was on sick leave from work. According to his parents, his supervisor called him repeatedly and demanded that he pick cotton. As the sole breadwinner in his family, Mutalibov financially supported his parents and his two brothers. Ammofos-Maxam is the main employer in Almalyk, where Mutalibov lived. His mother said he could not refuse to pick cotton because he feared losing his job. Mutalibov could have hired someone to pick in his place for one million soum (approximately US\$ 120), but the family could not afford it.

Mutalibov had worked at Ammofos-Maxam, a joint Uzbek-Spanish company and part of the national chemical conglomerate Uzkimyosanoat, for five years and each autumn had been sent by his employer to pick cotton. The chairman of the board of Uzkimyosanoat signed an order on September 25, directing eight subsidiary companies, including Ammofos-Maxam, to send a total of 6,000 employees to pick cotton in the Dustlik district in Jizzakh, and to arrange their transportation, food, and accommodation. The order states that the action is in accordance with the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Preparation of the 2018 Cotton Harvest and Harvesting of Ripe Cotton without Loss.”

This story is emblematic of the 2018 cotton harvest in Uzbekistan, highlighting the challenges that remain in the effort to end systemic forced labor and the toll on people forced to work. Despite the Uzbek government's genuine, public commitment to end forced labor in cotton production, the government's own centralized production system and real labor gaps— insufficient labor in less populous districts coupled with a drop in voluntary labor during the picking season— continued to drive the use of forced labor across the country in 2018. Even as parts of the government undertook measures to prevent and investigate cases of forced labor, other parts of the government directed employers to order their workers to pick cotton to make up for shortfalls of local voluntary pickers, orders which vulnerable employees like Mutalibov could not refuse. The story of Ammofos-Maxam's involvement in the cotton harvest also exposes the government's reliance on major national enterprises, businesses, and organizations, not only to supply thousands of employees as pickers, but also to bear the costs of their transportation, food, and accommodation during the harvest.



Uzbekistan's 2018 cotton harvest, which concluded in all regions of the country in the last week of November, showcased the enormous challenges in uprooting the country's deeply entrenched forced labor system. Driven by a commitment to reform at the highest levels of the government, there is a significant transition underway which is reflected in some encouraging signs of progress. But despite serious efforts by the central government to curtail forced labor for some citizens, key root causes remained in place, resulting in officials at both the local and national level to force citizens into the fields again and extort companies and organizations to provide resources and labor to cover shortfalls and ensure that the state set quota was fulfilled.

In 2018, forced labor remained a systemic problem because its structural underpinnings remained in place. The government has not yet enacted essential deep reforms, in particular of the government procurement or quota system that is a main driver of forced labor. As in previous years, the government continued to assign cotton production quotas to regions and districts and impose responsibility to fulfill these on officials. While significant increases in payment for cotton picking did increase voluntary participation in the harvest, especially in the early stages when cotton is most abundant and pickers can earn the most, this was not sufficient to cover labor shortfalls in low population districts or later in the season when working conditions worsened and pickers could earn much less. As a result, officials turned to public sector institutions as well as banks, enterprises, and businesses to send their employees to the fields or pay for pickers, to cover costs for these pickers, and, in some regions, to deliver cotton quotas. Identifying forced labor as the result of structural problems and policies under central control and not just the result of poor management practice by individual local officials, is important in order to identify appropriate reforms to address the underlying causes of the problem.



Employees of the Kuyichirchik electricity network prior to departure to the cotton fields. © Elena Urlaeva  
Kuyichirchik district, Tashkent region, October 18, 2018

## Key Findings from 2018

- ▶ The government's high-level commitment to end forced labor is real and significant. This commitment represents a remarkable shift from the government's position just two years ago and is a vital step towards the eventual eradication of forced labor. The government has supported its commitment with several policy changes that have also had a positive impact. However, forced labor persisted despite these efforts, underscoring the structural, root causes of forced labor that reforms have so far not yet addressed.
- ▶ The centrally-imposed quota system remained a key driver of forced labor across the system and in all regions monitored by Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF). Despite instructing regional and local officials not to use forced labor, the government used the state administrative apparatus to pressure them to fulfill quotas, including public statements of discontent from the president and prime minister. More than 100 officials were dismissed, fined, or disciplined for shortcomings in the harvest, receiving widespread attention in the Uzbek media. However, by highlighting penalties for inadequately managing the harvest, these cases undermined messages

on the prohibition of forced labor. Although the government did take steps to hold officials to account for the use of forced labor, reporting that it disciplined some 200 hokims, officials, and managers for forced labor violations, it has refused to make details about these cases, including names, positions, violations, or penalties, publicly available. When faced with the choice between not fulfilling the quota or using forced labor, officials resorted to forced labor in the face of threats of penalties such as dismissal from their jobs.

- ▶ The government significantly increased wages paid to pickers resulting in more voluntary pickers, especially early in the season when cotton is more plentiful and earning potential is high. But evidence demonstrated that the number of voluntary pickers dropped as available cotton decreased and weather worsened, which induced officials to resort to forced labor to meet their quotas and avoid punishment.
- ▶ Numerous major government organizations, including at least seven key national enterprises, utility companies, banks, factories, law enforcement, and government agencies, required their employees to pick cotton or pay for replacement pickers from the beginning of the harvest. There was also mass extortion from businesses and merchants to supply employees to pick cotton and pay their expenses, or to hire replacement workers.
- ▶ For the first time, the government did not mobilize university students to pick cotton, an important improvement. Health and education employees were not mobilized en masse from the beginning of the harvest, an improvement from previous years. However, in some regions local officials began forcing these employees into the fields by mid-October, once the supply of voluntary labor dropped off.
- ▶ There was some central direction of forced labor. Large numbers of people were sent from high population regions to lower population regions to pick cotton from the beginning of the harvest in early September, an effort which required central coordination. These pickers included voluntary picking groups as well as thousands of employees of national enterprises, state utility companies, and public sector institutions or replacement workers hired by them. In addition, law enforcement, military, and emergency service agencies sent employees and recruits to pick cotton which could not have occurred without central knowledge or approval.



- ▶ The climate for civil society activism around forced labor in Uzbekistan has undoubtedly improved in significant and meaningful ways in recent years. In addition to engaging with the International Labour Organization (ILO), a group of activists has had regular dialogue with Ministry of Labor officials, access that would have been impossible a few years ago. Activists have spoken publicly about the importance of this engagement for advancing labor rights as well as for helping to ensure their own protection from harassment and interference. However, tolerance of human rights activity by the authorities remained inconsistent. During the 2018 harvest, law enforcement and local government officials on several occasions detained, harassed or interfered with independent civil society monitors, including UGF monitors and monitors conducting ILO awareness raising activity. Criminal charges for illegal border crossing remained pending against Dmitry Tikhonov, an Angren-based human rights defender who documented forced labor for UGF and was forced to flee Uzbekistan in 2015 following an apparent arson attack on his home office.



Dmitry Tikhonov pictured alongside photos of wanted criminals, Police Department of Angren city ©AlekseyVолоsevich, September 27, 2018

## Methodology

In 2018, UGF monitored the cotton harvest for the ninth consecutive year since 2010, using a mixed methods approach of in-depth interviews, site visits, collection of documentary evidence, media monitoring, and direct reports via social media. UGF conducted monitoring in the Andijan, Fergana, Jizzakh, Khorezm regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and obtained information regarding forced labor in the Tashkent region from independent activists. Monitoring began in late August and continued through early February when workers could be interviewed after returning from the fields. With few exceptions, monitors live in the regions where they conduct monitoring. All monitors have received extensive training in international labor standards and have several years' experience monitoring forced labor for UGF.

Monitors conducted in-depth, confidential interviews in private with 70 people affected by or involved in cotton picking, including employees of public sector organizations, such as utility companies, education and medical institutions, entrepreneurs, students, union officials, voluntary pickers, people receiving child and welfare benefits, mahalla council officials, farmers and farm workers, and people hired as voluntary and replacement pickers. UGF also interviewed six current or former hokimiat officials with direct responsibilities related to the cotton harvest as well as a cotton gin accountant. UGF has withheld the districts in which they work to preserve their anonymity. All interviews were conducted in the interviewee's primary language without an interpreter. UGF prioritized interviews with those most vulnerable to forced labor, those who participated in the harvest, and those with direct knowledge of the cotton system over random sampling. Monitors also conducted 80 site visits to public sector institutions, banks, government offices, markets, businesses, mobilization sites, cotton fields, and pickers' housing to conduct 300 brief interviews on participation in the cotton harvest, voluntariness, conditions, and impact of the harvest on institutions.

UGF also monitored Uzbek and international press, including Ozodlik, the Uzbek service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which reports extensively on the cotton harvest and received dozens of messages a day from people affected by the harvest. Monitors also gathered information from documentary sources, including directives ordering participation in the harvest, ledgers tracking mobilization, government instructions on mobilization, quotas for providing cotton and/or labor for public sector institutions, and statements by cotton pickers declaring voluntary participation. UGF also received direct reports about the cotton harvest and forced labor via social media and a Facebook group, which it used to corroborate information gathered through interviews and documents.

In addition, UGF conducted monitoring of farms participating in the Sustainable Cotton Supply Chain Development Project in Uzbekistan, funded and implemented by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector lending arm of the World Bank Group. To do this, UGF conducted repeat visits during the season to more than 100 participating farms in the Jizzakh and Fergana regions and interviewed farmers, farm workers, pickers, and employees of public and private sector organizations in the surrounding communities. UGF's main objective was to determine whether forced labor was used on these farms during the 2018 cotton harvest. For a more detailed description of this project, UGF's monitoring work related to the project, and the project's results, see Systemic Forced Labor Shown through Farm-Level Monitoring, p. 43.



An employee of the UZBEKHIMMASH PLANT was sent from Chirchik city in the Tashkent region to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region  
14 October 2018, Dustlik district, Jizzakh region



## 2018 Findings

### Policy Developments to Combat Forced Labor

Over the last two years, the government has made important, substantive changes to policies on the use of forced labor. This deepened engagement and acknowledgement of the issue marks a fundamental shift from the stance of total denial of just a few years ago. Significantly, the government has strengthened its efforts to engage with civil society in its endeavors to end forced labor. In continuation of a process initiated in 2017, government officials held a series of formal dialogues with civil society activists on forced labor. The activists were able to present the findings of their own monitoring and, in some cases, seek remediation for violations.

In May 2018, the government facilitated a visit by a delegation of the Cotton Campaign, including a representative of UGF, to Tashkent.<sup>1</sup> During the visit the delegation met with senior government officials at all relevant institutions to discuss the Cotton Campaign's recommendations for a road map for eradicating forced labor, which had been requested by the government. At a follow up meeting in November 2018, Minister of Labor and Employment Relations, Sherzod Kudbiev, told representatives of the Cotton Campaign that he is willing to listen to "justified" criticisms from civil society.

This increased openness was echoed by a surge in public reporting on forced labor by international and Uzbek media, providing crucial transparency and an opportunity to corroborate reports of forced labor.

The government more than doubled payments for cotton pickers in 2018 compared to 2017. Differentiated rates between lower and higher-productivity regions were introduced and the price per kilogram paid to pickers was increased as the harvest progressed, in an effort to attract sufficient voluntary pickers throughout the harvest. The government reported that it made efforts to ensure that payment to pickers was on time and in full and to improve working conditions such as providing toilets, drinking water, and food.

In addition, awareness raising campaigns were organized to inform the public that the use of forced labor is punishable as an administrative and criminal offense. A parliamentary commission was established to ensure that labor rights are guaranteed and that measures to prevent, deter and eliminate forced and child labor are implemented. New amendments were made to the labor code, criminal code and administrative liability code and the capacity of the labor inspectorate was expanded. The government took disciplinary action including fines, demotions, and dismissals, against some officials for forced labor violations, but made few specific details available. The government also further reduced the land allocated to cotton production and made further progress toward its goal of privatization of the sector.



Human rights activist Elena Urlaeva interviewing the parents of Sohijjon Mutalibov, an employee of Ammofos-Maxam who was forcibly sent to pick cotton and died on October 6, 2018, Almalyk city, Tashkent region

NAZORATDA

«ЎЗКИМЁСАНОАТ» АКЦИЯДОРЛИК ЖАМИЯТИ

ФАКСХАБАРНОМА № 538/17

2018 йил «12» сентябрь

Тошкент шаҳри

«Навоiazot» АЖ, «Максам-Чирчик» АЖ,  
«Фаргонаазот» АЖ, «Аммофос-Максам» АЖ,  
«Самарқандкимё» АЖ, «Қўқон СФЗ» АЖ,  
«Дехқонобод калий заводи» МЧЖ,  
«Қўнгирод сода заводи» МЧЖ  
бошқаруви раисларига

Ўзбекистон Республикаси Вазирлар Маҳкамасининг 2018 йил пахта йигим теримиغا тайёргарлик куриш, етиштирилган ҳосилни ҳес нобуд қилмасдан йигиб-териб олиш юзасидан берилган топширигига асосан Жиззах вилояти Дўстлик туманига 6000 нафар теримчиларни жалб қилишни белгиланди.

Маъқур топширик ижросини сўзсиз таъминлаш, пахта йигим терим мавсумида иштирок этувчи қўнгилли ханарчиларга шарт-шароитларни яратиш, жумладан улар учун зарур бўладиган турар жойлари дислокацияларини белгилаш, турар жойларни талаб даражасига келтириш, пахта танийдиган автотранспорт воситалари билан таъминлаш мақсадида 6000 нафар теримчиларни масъул ўрибосарингиз билан жорий йилнинг 25 сентябридан мавсум давомида Жиззах вилояти Дўстлик туманига етиб боришни таъминлашингизни сўрайман.

№	Қорхона номи	Теримчилар сон
1	«Навоiazot» АЖ	2000
2	«Фаргонаазот» АЖ	2000
3	«Максам-Чирчик» АЖ	1150
4	«Аммофос-Максам» АЖ	400
5	«Самарқандкимё» АЖ	100
6	«Қўқон СФЗ» АЖ	200
7	«Дехқонобод калий ўғитлар» МЧЖ	100
8	«Қўнгирод сода заводи» МЧЖ	50
	Жами	6000

Бошқарув раиси

А.Абдуллаев

№ 1438  
25.09.2018

(under supervision)

Uzkimyosanoat Joint Stock Company

Fax message No. 599 A

September 25, 2018

Tashkent city

To the Chairmen of the Board of Navoiazot JSC, Maxam-Chirchik OJSC, Fargonaazot JSC, Ammofos-Maxam OJSC, "Samarkandkimyo" OJSC, "Kokand Superphosphate Plant" OJSC, "Dekhkanabad plant potassium fertilizers" UE, "Kungrad soda plant" UE.

Upon the order of the Cabinet of Ministers on the preparation of the 2018 cotton harvest and harvesting of ripe cotton without loss, it was decided to engage 6,000 pickers in the Dustlik district of the Jizzakh region.

For the purpose of the complete execution of this order, [trans. – it is necessary] to create conditions for voluntary pickers participating in cotton harvesting, to determine the necessary locations of their deployment, to arrange their accommodation, and to provide them with vehicles for transportation of cotton. Since **September 25** this year and for the period of cotton harvesting I ask you and your Deputy to ensure the arrival of 6,000 pickers to the Dustlik district of the Jizzakh region.

No.	Name of the enterprise	Number of people
1	Navoiazot JSC	2000
2	Fargonaazot JSC	2000
3	Maxam-Chirchik OJSC	1150
4	Ammofos-Maxam OJSC	400
5	Samarkandkimyo OJSC	100
6	Kokand Superphosphate Plant OJSC	200
7	Dekhkanabad plant potassium fertilizers UE	100
8	Kungrad soda plant UE	50
	Total	6000

Board Chairman

(signature)

A. Abdullayev

Stamp No. 1438

September 25, 2018



An employee of the Tashkent Thermal Power Plant who was sent to pick cotton in the Kuyichirchik district of the Tashkent region, told human rights activist Yelena Urlaeva that he had been picking cotton for 16 days. He became sick from the cold, but was not able to return home because he was afraid of being fired. © Elena Urlaeva  
Kuyichirchik district, Tashkent region, October 18, 2018

## Forced Labor Systemic in 2018: Reforms Needed to Address Root Causes

UGF found that systemic forced labor— forced labor that constitutes a fundamental and essential component of the cotton production system in Uzbekistan—persisted in the 2018 harvest, despite progress on the government’s real commitment to end it and significant progress in the reform process. Systemic forced labor is not simply the result of the actions of individual officials but arises from a system that tolerates and incentivizes their conduct.

An ILO working paper on modern slavery lays out the differences between individual and systemic cases of coercion, which call for distinct legal and policy responses to address them.<sup>2</sup> However it also cautions that consensus over these definitions is less important than reaching “agreement on how best to tackle the unfinished business, and to stand up to the challenges ahead.”<sup>3</sup> This pragmatic approach to understanding ongoing forced labor in Uzbekistan, and whether the problem is the result of individual actions or is propelled by state policies and embedded practices, is crucial to finding effective solutions to prevent



forced labor going forward. Structural reforms are critical to tackle root causes of forced labor. However criminal law and other enforcement measures can be used to provide accountability for serious abuses and deter future abuse, while other instruments could be used to provide protection for victims and compensation. In Uzbekistan, these approaches can be complementary. Eradicating forced labor will require reforms that address root causes, develop a meaningful culture of prevention and accountability, and empower civil society activists and groups, including those advocating for freedom of association and workers' rights.

## Quota system at root of continuing forced labor

The state procurement plan for cotton, also referred to as the quota system, remains one of the most pernicious drivers of forced labor. Under this system, the central government, which controls all aspects of cotton production on land and which is not under private production (the “cluster” system), imposes cotton production quotas on regions and districts.<sup>4</sup> The heads of regions and districts bear personal responsibility for fulfilling these quotas, also under threat of penalty.<sup>5</sup> This system creates significant incentives for regional and district officials to use forced labor since they risk serious consequences, such as dismissal, for failure to meet their quota obligations. A former hokimiat employee explained, “The hokimiat has one assignment from the central government: to fulfill the cotton quota. Hokims try to carry out this assignment well.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, a district hokimiat employee said, “The central government requires hokims to fulfill the cotton plan,” and if the plan is not fulfilled, hokims will lose their jobs.”<sup>7</sup> However, he said that in 2018, hokims faced competing pressures: “On the one hand [hokims] are required to fulfill the quota, on the other, they are told not to use forced labor.”<sup>8</sup>

In fact, the government did hold some officials accountable for using forced labor in 2018. The Ministry of Labor announced that more than 200 officials were punished for violations related to forced labor, but did not publicize a list of names, titles, violations, or sanctions.<sup>9</sup> The ILO similarly reported that 185 hokims, officials, and managers were disciplined for forced labor violations with dismissals, demotions, and fines but said that privacy concerns prevented details of these cases from being reported publicly.<sup>10</sup> This lack of detail means that assurances of accountability go unchecked by independent sources. For a government intent on stamping out forced labor, it is unclear what interest is served by keeping information about these cases shrouded in secrecy. With narrow exceptions, the luxury of anonymity is generally not granted to perpetrators of crimes, given a compelling public interest in transparency of justice. This interest is all the more compelling when the perpetrators are officials in positions of power and public trust who are alleged to have perpetrated violations against their own constituents.

At the same time the government disciplined some officials for forced labor violations, it also dismissed more than 100 officials for deficiencies in organizing the harvest, a term that includes failure to fulfill cotton quotas, reinforcing the risks to officials who do not meet their quotas. The Uzbek media reported extensively on these cases, often including the names and titles of the fired officials as well as statements made by the president and prime minister excoriating officials for harvest failures.<sup>11</sup>

Local officials, farmers, farm workers, mahalla council members, and people forced to pick cotton all pointed to government quotas as a key reason why forced labor continued in 2018. UGF interviewed six employees and one former employee of local hokimiats, a cotton gin accountant, and two mahalla council members, all with direct responsibilities related to the recruitment of cotton pickers or oversight of the harvest, who provided consistent, detailed accounts of how hokimiats, under pressure to fulfill quotas, use coercion to mobilize public sector employees to pick cotton and extort money to cover



Employees of schools and kindergartens from Bagdad, Buvayda and Uchkuprik districts in the Fergana region were mobilized to pick cotton for five day shifts on October 26, 2018

picking costs.<sup>12</sup> UGF also interviewed eight farmers and farm workers who all described the pressure that hokims face to fulfill quotas.<sup>13</sup> They said that hokims in turn exert pressure on organizations, enterprises, and small businesses to supply required labor and resources to pick cotton.<sup>14</sup> In 2018 this included forcing public sector organizations, including banks, utilities, public agencies, and sometimes medical and education institutions, to send their employees to the fields or require them to pay for replacement workers.

A hokimiat employee explained the role of the hokimiat in the harvest and how it meets demands for cotton pickers:

» The district hokimiat is the organ that implements and monitors government decisions.... The role of the hokimiat is limitless in its control of agriculture in the district. What does our work include? The district hokimiat receives orders from the regional hokim. Work is distributed on the basis of these orders. All the work from cotton sowing to growing, to caring for it and managing it, to the cotton harvest and allocation of pickers, is organized and controlled only through the hokimiat.... To pick cotton you cannot manage without employees of public organizations. This is a very big workforce. The hokimiat keeps public organizations under tight control. For example, if the regional hokim says that the Andijan region needs 40,000 pickers, then these 40,000 are divided among districts. So, for example our district has to supply 4,000 pickers. Just think for yourself: how can we manage to find so many people? All farmworkers in the district barely amount to 1,000 people. Therefore, we have to use public organizations. In the district there are around 100 organizations: kindergartens, schools, colleges. If every organization supplies 20 people, that's 2,000. The remaining 1,000 who come are recruited through mahalla councils. In villages the majority of unemployed people, the so-called 'unorganized population' are hired as replacement pickers by employees of public institutions. The mahalla can only recruit unemployed people who were not able to be hired [as replacement pickers] by mobilized public sector employees and women receiving child benefits. The mahalla can also organize pensioners going to pick 'on their own initiative.' The hokimiat does not instruct mahalla employees how to recruit people to pick cotton. The hokimiat only gives the order: recruit. Members of mahalla councils go from house to house and say, 'if you don't pick cotton, we'll stop paying your child benefits.' This isn't right, of course, they shouldn't do that. A lot of women complained about that in 2018.<sup>15</sup>



Employees of the company Uzbekneftgaz, Mubarek district, Kashkadarya region. "Employees of the gas processing plant pick cotton in freezing temperatures. Who will be held accountable for our health? They delay payment for cotton by 10 days and up to 10 kg is deducted from the payment".

Letter to Radio Ozodlik, November 12, 2018

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxtagram-muborak-gaz/29596384.html>

2018-11-12 08:32

ozodlik.org | Citizen Journalism

## Forced Labor and Extortion Used to Cover Labor and Resource Shortfalls

As has long been the case in Uzbekistan, although the majority of cotton pickers are voluntary in absolute numbers, the country faces key labor shortfalls for two major structural reasons. The first is the decline of voluntary labor as the cotton harvest progresses and earning potential for pickers decreases. The second is the lack of sufficient voluntary labor in low population cotton-growing areas in Uzbekistan.

The government has long addressed this issue by supplying large groups of pickers from higher population districts, which incurs enormous costs for transportation, accommodation, and food for these pickers. Due to pressure on officials to fulfill quotas and to pick cotton as quickly as possible, officials cover these gaps in both labor and resources by resorting to forced labor and extorting enterprises, organizations, and businesses to provide labor and cover costs.

Because hokims are accountable to central government for fulfilling their quotas, they fill these structural labor and resource gaps by calling on public sector organizations and businesses over whom they wield enormous control.

The extortion of organizations and businesses by hokims for labor and resources is not restricted to cotton picking, but is an entrenched practice extending to other sectors.<sup>16</sup> Outside the cotton sector, the forced labor of public employees is rampant. Hokims and other officials routinely send teachers, health care workers, and employees of state agencies to clean streets, plant flowers, do construction work, dredge ditches and perform public maintenance works for hours or days every week, at no extra pay and with a devastating impact on public services. They perform this work involuntarily, under threat of job loss, pay cuts or disciplinary measures if they refuse. Following the well-publicized death of a teacher killed by a truck while cleaning a highway in April 2018, the government vowed to end all forced labor of public sector employees and has begun to enact some reforms, although forced labor of public sector employees continues.<sup>17</sup> Officials, especially regional and district hokims, treat public institutions as endless sources of labor available to be deployed at any time and for any purpose, in particular to fulfill centrally-imposed mandates for public maintenance and agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

A nurse described relentless forced labor, including cotton picking, that takes her away from her job:



I like working as a nurse. I always dream that every day I will be allowed to do my job. Because in total I only work as a nurse three to five months a year. Two years ago, I started to keep track of the days I worked as a nurse. It has turned out to be 109 days per year. The rest of the time I have worked in the fields, carried out public maintenance, and street cleaning. True, nurses who are a little older may do their jobs 5-6 months a year, but not at my age [38 years old]. To fulfill all orders from the top, officials send out people like me. If they need more work done, then they will also send out the older nurses too. More than anything I don't like working in the fields, weeding and picking cotton.<sup>19</sup>

The nurse said that she was sent to another district to pick cotton from October 7 to November 20 because the district department of health ordered each medical institution to send 20 pickers and she could not refuse without risking her job. She said she and 500 other pickers lived in crowded, cold conditions in buildings with no windows and tents, sharing just four toilets. She said there was a tent for supervisors at the field that included five employees from the district health department, the union leader, two employees from the district hokimiat and one from the regional hokimiat.<sup>20</sup>



**National Bank of Uzbekistan**

ЎЗБЕКИСТОН RESPUBLIKASI TASHKI IKTISODIY FAOLiyAT MILLiy BANKI  
NATIONAL BANK FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

**БУЙРУҚ**

10. октябрь 2018 йил 799-х сон

Тошкент шаҳри

На основании Положения «Об оплате труда работников Национального банка ВЭД РУ», утвержденного решением Правления от 17.04.2017г. №394, а также в целях дополнительного материального стимулирования

**ПРИКАЗЫВАЮ:**

Произвести выплату материальной помощи для сезонной закупки сельскохозяйственной продукции работникам Национального банка ВЭД РУ, фактически работающим по состоянию на 10 октября 2018 года по 1 000 000 сум на каждого работника.

Затраты отразить на счете 56118...204 «Социальная защита».

Основание: рапорт ДФМ, ДЧП.

Председатель Правления

А. Мирсоатов

Первый заместитель  
Председателя Правления

Н. Сайдуллаев

Заместитель  
Председателя Правления

А. Мухамедханов

Заместитель  
Председателя Правления

Б. Жалилов

Заместитель  
Председателя Правления

А. Курамбоев

Директор Департамента  
финансового менеджмента

А. Хайрудинова

On October 10, 2018, the Management Board of the National Bank of Uzbekistan issued an order to give bank employees one million soum each as financial support for purchasing agricultural products. According to employees of the Qashqdaryo branch of the Bank, half of this so-called "potato money" was extorted for cotton harvest. They say that it was not the Bank management but the government who forced employees to spend their money on cotton rather than on agricultural products. Employees received no receipt for the 500,000 soum they had to pay to the cotton harvest.

## Picking rates not sufficient to attract voluntary labor for all stages of the harvest

Due to the use of outdated crop growing practices in Uzbekistan, cotton ripens in stages, with approximately 50% of cotton harvested during the first pass, 30% during the second pass, and the remaining 20% over the third and fourth passes.<sup>21</sup> Most voluntary labor is available at the beginning of the season when earning potential is highest and the weather and working conditions are best. Voluntary labor drops off sharply after the first pass and all but disappears by the end of the season. The government has moved to address this decline by increasing rates paid to pickers, with a significant increase and differentiated rates in 2017. In 2018, the rates increased further and, for the first time, varied between regions. Rates increased as the season progressed in an effort to attract voluntary workers as cotton and earning potential decreased. Districts with lower yields or more difficult conditions offered higher rates to attract more voluntary pickers.<sup>22</sup> These measures, while generally positive, did not go far enough to address the problem of ensuring sufficient numbers of pickers as the season progressed.

**Table 1: Payments to Pickers by Region and Pass and Average Earnings**

	First Pass Mid-September-Early October			Second Pass Mid-October-Late October			Third Pass Late October-Early November		
	Soum /kg (\$US)	Average kg/day	Average soum/day	Soum /kg	Average kg/day	Average soum/day	Soum/ kg	Average kg/day	Average soum/day
<b>Low Yield regions</b>	950 (\$0.11)	90-120	85,500- 114,000 (\$10.30- 13.73)	1,150 (\$0.14)	40-60	46,000- 69,000 (\$5.54- 8.31)	1,300 (\$0.15)	5-20	6,500- 26,000 (\$0.78- 3.12)
<b>High Yield regions</b>	650 (\$0.07)	90-120	58,500- 78,000 (\$7.04- 9.40)	850 (\$0.10)	50-70	42,500- 59,500 (\$5.12- 7.17)	1,000 (\$0.12)	10-30	10,000- 30,000 (\$1.20- 3.61)

The disparity in earnings between passes and regions was further compounded by the fact that costs to pickers for food, transportation, sometimes housing and other costs, remained the same throughout the season. These costs further reduced incentives to pick cotton later in the season when costs sometimes exceeded earnings. In many districts in 2018, picking continued through the end of November, constituting a fourth pass when virtually only forcibly mobilized pickers were still in the fields searching for cotton to fulfill quotas imposed on their institutions (see below: Forced Labor of Public Sector Employees, p 25). Pickers are often not paid for this cotton, which is usually of poor quality and high in trash content. Farmers also make little or no money on this cotton as they are paid according to the quality of the cotton (which is graded at the gin), but hokims demand that every last cotton boll is harvested to ensure they fulfill their district quota.

The chairperson of a mahalla women’s committee who was tasked with recruiting cotton pickers, said that attracting voluntary pickers early in the season was easy but got much harder after the first pass. “At first it was easy to recruit pickers because it was possible for them to earn money. Later, no one wanted to go to the fields and we had to use different tactics, including threatening to cut off their welfare and child benefits to get them to pick.” She said that she was also required by the mahalla to pick cotton for the entire season.<sup>23</sup> By the end of the season, she and several other pickers together spent four hours to pick only six kilograms—some collected unopened buds and others broke them open to pull out the cotton—so they bought cotton from local people at inflated prices and turned it in instead.<sup>24</sup>

The decline in voluntary labor after the first pass and the pressing demand on local officials to meet quotas caused a sharp increase in the use of forced labor. Although some lower population districts received brigades of pickers from the beginning of the harvest that included forced pickers, higher population regions such as Fergana and Andijan relied mainly on voluntary brigades of local pickers through the first pass. However, in all regions monitored by UGF, officials began to turn to forced labor after the first pass.<sup>25</sup>

For example, a teacher told UGF that she picked cotton voluntarily on weekends on a relative’s farm from the beginning of the season to earn some extra money. After the first pass, she stopped picking because it was no longer worth it. She said that after October 20, local officials assigned a cotton quota to every public organization in the district. Her school was required to provide 15 tonnes. She picked for 20 days after her director threatened to fire her when she protested. The school deducted money from teachers’ salaries to cover the cost of the 30 teachers it sent to pick cotton on overnight shifts in other districts. She said, “The director ordered us to tell children that their parents must each provide the school with five kilograms of cotton per day, not money. At first the school managed to collect two or two and a half tonnes per day but now we can’t manage 300 kilograms.”<sup>26</sup>



Uzbekneftegaz company’s bus bringing it’s employees to pick cotton in the Dustlik district, Jizzakh region, November 12, 2018



## Forced Labor of Public Sector Employees

Mass mobilization of employees from health and educational institutions dropped in 2018. For the first time, these employees were not mobilized to pick cotton from the beginning of the harvest, an improvement from 2017. However, this in turn led to increased pressure on employees from other public sectors to pick cotton, including the tax inspectorate, banks, businesses, factories, police, and the army, to compensate for the reduction in pickers from the health and education sectors. By about mid-October, when voluntary labor dropped after the first pass, centrally-imposed quotas and a lack of clear accountability for forced labor violations again drove regional and local officials to force employees from the education and health sectors to pick cotton to meet quotas. These employees were at first mobilized only on weekends, and then for longer shifts during the week as the harvest progressed. A teacher described the pressure on schools to provide pickers:

» Conditions changed in October. The mahalla committees, unable to recruit enough unemployed people, complained to our director. The director called a meeting and told us that 10 people had to go [and stay] overnight to pick cotton on a 15-day shift for the mahalla committee and that they must hide [the fact] that they are schoolteachers. He asked for volunteers. Everyone was silent so he told us that every department had to send someone. I couldn't hold back and said 'Shouldn't teachers teach their classes? Didn't the prime minister prohibit teachers from picking cotton?'.... The director screamed at me, 'Stay out of politics if you don't understand! The president and prime minister have said one thing to the people and given different orders to officials. That way the president stays clean and we are the bad guys. Know your place. I didn't make this order up. I am giving it because I was ordered from above. You are obliged to pick cotton. You have no choice. If not, you have only three or four years left until your pensions and you will be fired and won't be able to get another job. You know that cotton is at the level of government policy... One more thing, don't complain to the Portal [online presidential virtual reception center], it won't work....' If only there were some organization I could complain to that would solve this problem! Such organizations do not exist.<sup>27</sup>

Other public sector employees also said they had to pick cotton because they feared losing their jobs or other penalties.<sup>28</sup> Some said they had to hire and pay for replacement pickers if they did not want to pick themselves.<sup>29</sup> A street sweeper of a public maintenance department told UGF that her supervisor told her to pick cotton or else she would have to do three times her usual amount of work.<sup>30</sup> Public sector employees also said their



Cotton field in the Jizzakh region, November 24, 2018

Despite the lack of cotton, employees of organizations and enterprises in the Jizzakh region were forced to continue to go to the fields to harvest only 2–3 kg of cotton per day. Letter to Radio Ozodlik from the director of one of the public organizations November 24, 2018

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/hokim-hammani-paxtaga-majburlayapti/29618595.html>

organizations had to carry out their regular work while simultaneously providing employees to pick cotton. This resulted in excessive hours for staff who had to complete their regular work after picking cotton or an extra, unpaid burden on their colleagues to cover for them.<sup>31</sup> One public sector worker said he picked cotton all day and then went to the office to do his regular work until midnight.<sup>32</sup>

Local officials in some districts imposed specific cotton quotas on public sector organizations, requiring each to provide a certain cotton quantity each day.<sup>33</sup> A hokimiat employee confirmed, “The hokim imposed a cotton quota on each organization—not in September, when there was a lot of cotton, but in October or November when there was no cotton left and they had to ‘buy’ it from gins.”<sup>34</sup> Inefficient cotton cultivation practices coupled with pressure from the highest levels to fulfill quotas, creates multiple opportunities for corruption (see Corruption, p 38). This refers to the practice of organizations or farmers paying bribes to gins to receive paperwork that it submitted a certain amount of cotton.

Organizations that get assigned cotton quotas divide the quota among staff members so that each staff member has to provide a certain amount of cotton. Since there was little or no cotton left in the fields, some public sector employees had to buy cotton at inflated prices from locals who had hidden extra cotton away to sell or pay farmers to be allowed to pick on their fields.<sup>35</sup>

A doctor said that she and her colleagues had to pay farmers to pick cotton late in the season so they could fulfill the hospital's quota.<sup>36</sup>

» Today 40% of the hospital staff is going from house to house searching for cotton. Even if the fields are already planted with wheat or filled with [irrigation] water or dried cotton stalks, people are hoping to find whatever cotton is left. People don't have any cotton left on the dried stalks [which they have cut for firewood] but on fields, which are already planted with wheat and irrigated, some cotton buds left on the stalks still open up, so our staff are searching for places like that. In five or six hours they can barely gather five or six kilograms of cotton. But aside from that, we have to pay the farmer 1,800-2,000 soum [approximately US\$ 0.21-0.24] per kilogram! This money is then deducted equally from employees' salaries.<sup>37</sup>

In Andijan, the requirements on public sector institutions were especially harsh. Two doctors said that local officials parked cotton trailers next to their schools and hospitals and employees had to buy or bring cotton to fill them each day.<sup>38</sup> One said, "There is a trailer parked near the hospital. In October we brought 500-600 kilograms of cotton per day. Now we can only find 100-200 kilograms a day. If every department brings 30-40 kilograms a day, we can fill the trailer."<sup>39</sup> Ozodlik published a letter from the Buz district education department in the Andijan region ordering each school director to bring a daily cotton quota to fill a trailer parked next to the Buz hokimiat building.<sup>40</sup>

Public sector employees explained that starting in about mid-October, officials ordered directors of institutions to organize "voluntary" picking groups of their employees or to collect money to hire replacement pickers. Three medical workers from Karakalpakstan said that the medical department of their district started sending all employees, including technical and medical staff, to pick cotton in shifts and some hired replacement pickers.<sup>41</sup> A doctor from a public health agency also said that all employees of her agency had to start picking cotton or



hire replacement pickers from mid-October and that they were instructed to write statements that they were picking voluntarily.<sup>42</sup> For example, directors of three kindergartens in Khorezm said that they had to collect 900,000 soum (approximately US \$107) from their employees to hire replacement pickers. The directors said that if they refused to fulfill the hokim's orders they feared reprisals, including burdensome inspections that could serve as a pretext to remove them from their jobs.<sup>43</sup> Similarly a school director said,

» At the beginning of the second and third pass, after it got cold, we received a verbal order from the district department of education to send ten people from the kindergarten. We were told that it didn't matter who picked—either hired replacement workers, employees or their relatives, or the parents of the children at the kindergarten—but we had to find ten people. We were told to warn our pickers to tell anyone who asked that they were 'unemployed pickers.'<sup>44</sup>

However, by late October pressure on schools and medical institutions increased as voluntary pickers stopped going to the fields and pressure on hokims to meet quotas mounted. A teacher from the Ellikkala district in Karakalpakstan said, "At first the prosecutor asked us [to pick cotton] but now we are strictly ordered to the fields. Some teachers can't pick cotton for health reasons and hire replacement pickers."<sup>45</sup> A nurse at a tuberculosis hospital told UGF that the hospital started sending 50 of its 237 employees to pick cotton every day from the beginning of the harvest but that on October 17 her supervisor informed hospital staff that the local department of health had issued instructions for an additional 30 hospital employees to pick cotton on the weekends and, if asked, were told to say they were with a mahalla picking group. The supervisor said that picking was mandatory. Some employees hired replacement pickers instead. The nurse said that she attempted to refuse by telling her supervisor, "there is a law against forced labor. [My supervisor] said that that doesn't concern us and anyone who doesn't agree to pick cotton must write a statement agreeing to resign and that is according to an order from the department of health."<sup>46</sup>

The hokimiat of the Namangan region issued a directive on November 21 ordering 7,237 employees of 82 public organizations to pick cotton.<sup>47</sup> The directive, which is signed by the deputy hokim of the Namangan region, orders each employee to pick 15 kilograms of cotton each day and assigns a quota to each organization that it must deliver by November 27. There were virtually no voluntary pickers still working in late November, and what little cotton was left was of poor quality that would fetch a very low price. Given transportation and other costs, as well as the impact on institutions of taking more than 7,000 employees away from their jobs, the order was not driven by economic considerations, but solely to fulfill the centrally-imposed quota.



Foto: «Turon 24»

The city of Karshi, near the sport complex „Geolog“. On November 2, 2018, workers from the Shurtangazkimiyo plant were forcibly sent to pick cotton for 20 days in the Nishan and Kasbi districts of the Kashkadarya region. One of the plant's employees told a “Turon 24” reporter that he had been told, “If you don't go, you will lose your job right away.” The employee said that he did not see the point in going to the fields at that time of the year, since it was not possible to harvest more than 20 kg of cotton per day.

Source: Daryo, 2 November 2018

<https://daryo.uz/ki/2018/11/02/qashqadaryoda-sho'rtangazkimyo-majmuasi-ishchi-xodimlari-majburiy-ravishda-paxtaga-jalb-qilinmoqda/>

## Extortion of Organizations, Enterprises and Businesses to Supply Labor, Cover Costs

The government extorted companies and organizations to provide labor to cover picker shortages, particularly to low-population districts, as well as to supply resources to cover the costs for these pickers. As in previous years, in 2018 the government organized large-scale internal labor transfers to ensure that cotton producing districts with low populations had sufficient labor to harvest the cotton. These brigades were comprised of employees or replacement pickers mobilized from large enterprises and organizations, including grain mills, auto parts factories, alcoholic beverage distilleries, public utility companies, and public sector organizations such as firefighters, police cadets, and employees of public maintenance departments. While some of these internal migrants were groups of voluntary, unemployed workers, many of them were employees required to pick involuntarily or replacement workers hired by them. Companies and organizations usually had to bear the costs for providing transportation, food, and accommodation for pickers. These costs are in addition to the often-devastating impact of lost employee time, all of which amount to a major unaccounted-for subsidy for the cotton harvest.

It is not possible to reconcile the large-scale deployment of thousands of employees and imposition of related costs, including the costs of lost productivity, on major public and private enterprises and organizations to pick cotton, with the argument put forward by the government that forced labor in 2018 resulted solely from poor local management practices. The vast outlay of resources and employee time by public and private enterprises to the cotton harvest clearly illustrates the government system of forced labor that remained in place. Regional and district officials extorted businesses and organizations in their jurisdictions by bringing administrative pressure to bear. However, these officials do not have the authority over organizations in other regions or major national enterprises in other regions to demand that they deploy employees to pick cotton and cover their costs. Such orders could only have occurred at the central level.

Corporate orders requiring employees to participate in the cotton harvest and to divert company resources raise major concerns about corporate transparency and fiduciary duties to shareholders. This is particularly troubling given Uzbekistan's efforts to attract foreign direct investment to the cotton cluster system and its emerging textile sector.

### Major enterprises provide forced labor on orders from above

UGF obtained documents from various enterprises and government agencies ordering the deployment of employees to pick cotton and to pay for related costs.

One of these, an order signed by the chairman of the board of the joint stock company Uzmetkombinat, a metallurgical company in Bekabad, in the Tashkent region, ordered 3,200 cotton pickers to be sent to the Bekabad district. The order specifies that pickers should be made up of 1,500 employees and 1,700 hired pickers, and that costs should be attributed to the company's "general industrial costs."<sup>48</sup> It does not specify how costs related to lost employee time and company productivity should be accounted for. The order clearly shows the chain of authority on which it is based: the September 10 Protocol of the Cabinet of Ministers, a decision of the hokim of the Tashkent region, and two letters from the hokim of Bekabad city.<sup>49</sup> Two other documents, published by media outlets, also refer to this Cabinet of Ministers Protocol, which is not publicly available.<sup>50</sup>

Uzkimyosanoat, the national chemical enterprise and the parent company of Ammofos-Maxam, a joint-stock company and Spanish joint venture that is one of Uzbekistan's largest producers of fertilizer, ordered the deployment of 6,000 employees of its affiliate companies to pick cotton, including 400 from Ammofos-Maxam.<sup>51</sup> One of those employees was Mutalibov, the 24-year old who died from injuries sustained in a fight a few days after being forcibly deployed to pick cotton.<sup>52</sup> UGF sent a letter to Maxamcorp S.A.U,

the Spanish parent company that holds 49% of the shares of Ammofos-Maxam, informing it that employees of two companies in Uzbekistan, Ammofos-Maxam and Maxam-Chirchiq, were forced to pick cotton and requesting an investigation of Mutalibov's death.<sup>53</sup> UGF has not yet received a reply to its letter at the time of writing, but the Almalyk office of Ammofos-Maxam has since paid Mutalibov's family 90 million soum (approximately US \$10,843).<sup>54</sup>

On October 24, the deputy chairman of the board of the government enterprise company Uzsharobsanoat, a conglomerate that produces wine and spirits and operates production facilities, agrobusinesses, and stores throughout Uzbekistan, sent a message to 13 of its affiliates reminding them that each had been ordered to send 100 employees to pick cotton, but that the number of cotton pickers sent by the company had decreased.<sup>55</sup> The message tells each affiliate to "urgently supplement each brigade with the necessary number of pickers by 7:00 p.m., October 24, and for the pickers to appear in person at the cotton headquarters."<sup>56</sup> UGF also documented employees of other Uzsharobsanoat companies picking cotton that were not included in the message.<sup>57</sup>

Uzdonmakhsulot, the national grain enterprise which is under control of the Cabinet of Ministers, has 44 production facilities and 25 affiliates across the country.<sup>58</sup> Uzdonmakhsulot sent employees and replacement pickers from at least seven production facilities to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region. An employee from the Bukhara region production facility who picked cotton in Jizzakh, said the company covered all expenses related to sending its employees to the fields in Jizzakh where they picked cotton for two months.<sup>59</sup> The company's financial situation was highlighted in January 2019, when employees of an Uzdonmakhsulot facility in the Asaka district in the Andijan region, held a two-hour strike to protest against low salaries and delayed salary payments.<sup>60</sup>



Living quarters for the pickers of „Andijon Biokimyo Zavodi“ JSC, Dustlik district, Jizzakh region, October 16, 2018

## No protection for employees ordered to pick cotton

These orders highlight the vulnerability of employees and their inability to refuse to pick cotton for fear of losing their jobs. In the context of high unemployment in Uzbekistan, steady jobs such as those at factories and enterprises, are in high demand and employees who refuse their supervisors' orders can easily be replaced. Employees have little protection from such demands or from reprisals for refusing. There are no independent trade unions in Uzbekistan; all unions currently in existence are affiliates of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan (FTUU), which is widely perceived to lack independence and serve the interests of the management and government, not workers.<sup>61</sup> The International Federation of Trade Unions (ITUC) came to the conclusion that the "FTUU is not an independent organization."<sup>62</sup> Two employees told UGF that their unions not only assist management but also sometimes organize and supervise forced labor, including cotton picking, on behalf of the management and government.<sup>63</sup> The Uzmetkombinat order is jointly signed in agreement with the trade union committee chairman.<sup>64</sup>

An employee of the joint-stock company Andijan Biokhimyo Zavodi, a producer of alcoholic beverages in Andijan, said that the company which employs 600 people, sent 300 employees to pick cotton from September 15 to November 10. Half of these picked locally, in the Andijan region and the others were sent to pick in the Jizzakh region. The company paid for the transport, accommodation, and food for its employees, including hiring workers to repair unsafe toilets and housing, and purchasing equipment to cook food for workers. The company informed workers that any money they earned for the cotton they picked would go to the company because it was operating at a loss during the cotton season and needed to recoup some of its expenses. By mid-October, the company's output had noticeably fallen because half of its employees were picking cotton.<sup>65</sup> The employee told UGF:

»» At the beginning, [our group] picked 8 or 9 tonnes every day [53-60 kilograms per picker per day] and 3 or 4 tonnes [20- 26 kilograms per picker per day] in October. If we consider the costs incurred by the company for food and housing for pickers, then there was no profit for anyone. In early November, it became very cold and the workers were exhausted. The housing was not heated, many people got sick and had to buy medicine.... Every day we waited for the harvest to end. Did we pick cotton of our own free will? Are you joking? Who told you that? We all picked cotton because we had to. Company employees do not want to work in the fields. We have other jobs!"<sup>66</sup>

The employee said that he would have had to hire a replacement picker to avoid picking cotton but could not afford to. By the end of the season replacement pickers cost one million soum (approximately US \$120) for a 15-day shift.





„Everybody went to (pick) cotton“, Notice on the door of the Andijan Center for testing and certification, November 5, 2018

### Extortion of employees and organizations to hire replacement pickers and cover costs

UGF collected evidence that some enterprises and organizations collected money to hire replacement pickers so their own employees could keep working. UGF visited seven banks in Nukus and Turtkul in Karakalpakstan and found that that the banks organized replacement pickers to work for bank employees and required their employees to pay for them.<sup>67</sup> Replacement pickers cost 20,000 soum (approximately US\$ 2.40) per day at the beginning of the season and 25,000 (approximately US\$3) per day toward the end and bank employees said they had to pay for about 10 days each.<sup>68</sup> Bank employees told UGF that they received these orders from the management of the bank. In each case, bank management, such as the accounting or human resources departments organized the pickers and collected money from employees. Each of the seven banks hired between 50 and 80 pickers.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, the accounting department of Yog'gar, a company that produces cottonseed oil, hired 80 people to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region and 60 to pick locally.<sup>70</sup> Cotton gins in Ellikkala,<sup>71</sup> Beruni,<sup>72</sup> and Turtkul<sup>73</sup> districts in Karakalpakstan sent groups of 40 and 80, comprised of both employees and replacement pickers to pick locally and pick in the Jizzakh region. Replacement pickers worked for the entire season, paid for by several employees, while employees generally picked for 10-15 day shifts.<sup>74</sup>

## Pressure from central government to fulfill quotas driving extortion and forced labor

Extortion from enterprises and organizations to cover shortages in both labor and money to cover the costs of cotton picking are structural problems that have remained unaddressed by the government's reform efforts so far. A hokimiat employee with oversight of the cotton harvest explained that hokims cannot fulfill their quotas without violating the law or people's rights because they are not allocated either the necessary resources or sufficient labor to do so:

» On one hand, they are required to fulfill the quota, on the other they are told there should be no forced labor... During this harvest the hokim told us to send pickers to Syrdarya. The hokim gave us no instructions about where to get money for transportation, for food, or to ensure decent living conditions [for pickers]. The hokim was ordered to do this from Tashkent and he ordered us, and we, in turn ordered the people below us. The money that is collected and spent on pickers is not accounted for anywhere, not documented, and is not under anyone's supervision.<sup>75</sup>

Other officials also confirmed that they do not have the money to cover the cost of the cotton harvest, despite being required by the central government to fulfill their quotas.<sup>76</sup> One said that the lack of sufficient resources is "the most painful issue" for the hokimiat, and that people blame the hokims for the costs of the cotton season, when "the hokims are not at fault, the system is."<sup>77</sup>

Another official explained that cotton costs are paid by the people, not by the government: "Expenses for organizing the harvest are covered by the people themselves, mainly the private sector and public organizations. For example, if we have to send several thousand pickers to Syrdarya and Jizzakh, it costs a lot of money. If they are employees of public organizations, it's easy. Each organization pays for the transportation and food at the fields. This is despite the fact that everyone says the farmers will pay. We never believed that, so we have imposed these costs on organizations."<sup>78</sup> The official also explained that if pickers are unemployed people, officials extort money from private entrepreneurs to cover their costs.<sup>79</sup>



Хлопок-2018: в Узбекистане уволили очередного хокима

Cotton 2018: „Another Hokim is Fired in Uzbekistan“ - Headline of the popular Uzbek website Kun.uz

During October 2018, the Uzbek press regularly reported the names and ranks of various officials (hokims, prosecutors, tax inspectors, police chiefs) who had been punished for „serious flaws in organizing cotton harvest“.

<https://kun.uz/ru/news/2018/10/18/hlopok-2018-v-uzbekistane-uvolili-ocerednogo-hokima?q=%2Fru%2F-news%2F2018%2F10%2F18%2Fhlopok-2018-v-uzbekistane-uvolili-ocerednogo-hokima>, Kun.uz, October 10, 2018

Public sector employees told UGF that their supervisors collected money from them or deducted money from their salaries to cover costs for pickers sent by these institutions to pick cotton in other districts.<sup>80</sup> Several employees said they were forced to pick cotton but did not get paid for the cotton they picked because their organizations took the money to recoup the costs for transportation, food, and accommodation for pickers.<sup>81</sup> A utility employee said he had to pick cotton or hire a replacement picker so he decided to pay for a replacement picker and went to work as a day laborer in the rice harvest because he could earn much more than he could picking cotton.<sup>82</sup>

A National Bank employee from Kashkadarya wrote to Ozodlik to complain that half the money for purchasing winter food supplies that bank employees receive as an annual benefit was withheld for the cotton harvest.<sup>83</sup> The employee said they usually receive the money on a debit card but in 2018 they received only half the amount, in cash, and the reduction was not officially accounted for. The employee said that the hokimiat required the bank to contribute the money to the harvest.<sup>84</sup>

In a stark example of how officials sap resources from public services to provide supplies to cotton pickers, a teacher from a specialized school for children with tuberculosis told UGF that on September 28, 2018, the school's director ordered the school to give 50 mattresses and blankets to soldiers who had arrived to pick cotton in the district. The teacher, Zulfiya Mavlonova, said that the school did not have enough extra bedding to supply the soldiers so 30 of the mattresses and blankets were taken from the sick children, who then had nothing to sleep on and complained of the cold.<sup>85</sup>

### Poor Living Conditions for Pickers, Promised Conditions Not Fulfilled

Many pickers complained of poor working and living conditions, especially cold, crowded housing and insufficient hygiene facilities for pickers working with an overnight stay.<sup>86</sup> Two women expressed concern about the perceived threat of sexual harassment. One said that she and other women awoke at 4 a.m. each day to use the toilets and washing facilities before the men because there were no separate facilities and they felt uncomfortable doing so in the presence of men and said the women did not use the showers at all because they were shared with men. She said it was “frightening” to live in such close proximity and without privacy with hundreds of men she did not know.<sup>87</sup> A teacher forced to pick cotton said that a local official came to the fields each day, drank alcohol, and made unwanted advances toward women picking cotton. She said that she and other women tried to hide, afraid each day that they would be “chosen” by him.<sup>88</sup>

Insufficient funding to cover the costs of cotton picking combined with a lack of protection of workers' rights affected both voluntary and involuntary pickers. Five people told UGF that they did not receive the conditions or benefits they were promised for picking cotton.<sup>89</sup> In addition, UGF received a copy of a letter from eight residents of the Markhamat district of the Andijan region sent to President Mirziyoyev in December 2018.<sup>90</sup> They complained that three mahallas had recruited them to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region, promising 500,000 soum (approximately US \$60) per month and 500 kilograms of coal but they did not receive payment. They said they agreed to pick in Jizzakh from October 4-18 on the condition that travel expenses, decent living conditions and food would be provided. Ultimately, they paid for their own transport and food, and lived in an abandoned building with broken windows. After their return, the three mahalla chairmen refused to pay what they were promised.<sup>91</sup>

Ozodlik reported that 35 leaders of picking brigades who recruited cotton pickers for two months “day and night,” complained that they never received the promised payment for this work. The brigade leaders included chairmen and secretaries of mahallas, neighborhood watchmen, and women's' committee activists. The brigade leaders told Ozodlik that they had a contract with LDT “Textile Finance Khorezm” and had been promised one million soum (approximately US \$120) for their work.<sup>92</sup>

An order, signed by the deputy governor of Namangan region, directing 82 state organizations including banks, utility companies, the youth union, tax authority, department of tourism, and regional labor union, to deliver 760 metric tons of cotton by November 27, 2018. The order specifies the number of employees of each organization and the amount of cotton each organization should deliver.

**№ 15/18-101**  
**15.11.2018**  
**15.11.2018**

**№ 15/18-101**  
**15.11.2018**  
**15.11.2018**

№	Organizational name	Number of employees	Assigned cotton delivery quota (metric tons)	Assigned cotton delivery quota (metric tons)
1	...	...	...	...
2	...	...	...	...
3	...	...	...	...
4	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	...	...
6	...	...	...	...
7	...	...	...	...
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79	...	...	...	...
80	...	...	...	...
81	...	...	...	...
82	...	...	...	...

## Corruption

Although corruption in the cotton sector was outside the scope of UGF’s monitoring of the 2018 harvest, respondents told UGF that pressure to deliver mandatory cotton quotas on districts, farmers, and organizations contributed to corruption in the cotton system and distortions about the amount of cotton harvested.

A hokimiat employee said that the hokim ordered public organizations to deliver unrealistic cotton quotas of four to ten tonnes so they had to bribe gins to provide paperwork that they had fulfilled their quotas:

» [The quotas on organizations] was an order from the hokim, but the quota wasn’t issued in September when there was a lot of cotton in the fields, but at the end of October to November 10, when there was very little cotton. Organizations, unable to find cotton, had to go to the gins and pay millions of soum for a single sheet of paper confirming the organization had turned in its quota. The money for this was collected from the employees of the organizations. The price per kilogram went up from 1,500 to 2,500 [approximately US \$0.18-0.30] soum. This was standard practice in 2018.<sup>93</sup>

A doctor explained that mahalla councils also make money from public sector institutions struggling to meet their cotton quotas. She said that mahalla councils “sell” their picking groups to hospitals and other institutions that need to pick cotton— meaning that a mahalla picking group will pick for the institution at an inflated cost. She said that in 2018, hiring one mahalla picker cost the institution 300,000 soum (approximately US \$36) per week.<sup>94</sup> The doctor also said that public institutions can purchase forms from mahalla councils confirming that the institution turned in a specific amount of cotton.<sup>95</sup>

Two people who picked cotton and a farmer said they or others held some of their cotton back from the first pass so they could turn it in later when they could not meet picking quotas, or sell it at inflated rates to public sector employees, and emphasized that this is a common practice.<sup>96</sup> A nurse said that her two sisters-in-law picked cotton and each took five to ten kilograms home each day until they had amassed 500 kilograms which they sold at the end of the season at inflated prices to public sector employees who needed cotton to fulfill their quotas.<sup>97</sup> On a much larger scale, a factory employee said that the factory director submitted daily accounts of how much his employees picked but that he withheld a tonne per day that he sold on the side at inflated prices to those who needed to fulfill their quotas.<sup>98</sup>

Two public employees said that the pressure on them to fulfill quotas also affected the integrity of public services. For example, a teacher said that the school required parents of each child to bring a specific quantity of cotton to school each day so that the school could meet its quota.<sup>99</sup> A nurse said that she had to pay for cotton to help meet her hospital's quota but that she would recoup the money from her patients.<sup>100</sup>

At the gin level, a gin accountant said that officials “use cotton to rob the Uzbek population.”<sup>101</sup> He explained that farmers and public sector organizations all regularly bribe the gin to “buy cotton” or to buy paperwork confirming that they have met their quotas, otherwise farmers could lose their land and employees could lose their jobs.<sup>102</sup> The accountant described bribery and manipulation of accounting “worth millions of dollars.” He said, “You probably know that all organizations were given a cotton quota. Some organizations use their own employees to pick cotton, others hire replacement pickers. But there is almost no cotton left in the fields! This year there was very little cotton. What do organizations do? Well done! They “buy” cotton from us.”<sup>103</sup> The accountant said that the gin buys cotton from farmers at 1,000 soum per kilogram (approximately US\$ 0.12) and “sells” it [on paper] to organizations at 1,600 soum per kilogram, thus making a profit from the difference (approximately US\$ 0.19). “In one day we sell up to 50 tonnes of cotton [to organizations]. But in reality, this cotton doesn't exist - but we do this and come out looking clean.”<sup>104</sup>

The accountant described how cotton absorbs moisture from the air over several days at the gin and takes on additional weight. The gin records a lower level of moisture when it accepts cotton from farmers. But on paper, the cotton “gains” 300-400 kilograms of weight per tonne that it can “sell” for profit.<sup>105</sup>



By the end of November, workers of organizations were required to deliver cotton to a trailer near the hokimiyat building of the Buz district, Andijan region.

## Estimating the Scale of Forced Labor

In attempting to estimate the scale of forced labor, it is important to consider not just absolute numbers of people forced to work in the cotton harvest, but to consider a range of factors:

- ▶ **Enterprises, banks, utilities, and some government agencies were required to send their employees and/or hire replacement pickers from the beginning of the harvest. These include major government-controlled national monopolies with numerous facilities and affiliate companies that employ thousands of people. UGF documented employees of the following government owned companies who were forced to pick cotton:**
  - **Uzkimyosanoat (chemicals)**
  - **Uzmetkombinat (metallurgy)**
  - **Uzsharobsanoat (alcoholic beverages)**
  - **Uzdonmahsulot (grain)**
  - **Uzbekneftegaz (oil)**
  - **Uzbekenergo (electricity)**
  - **Ozbekko'mir (coal)**
  
- ▶ **UGF obtained copies of several documents from government agencies and businesses ordering their employees to participate in the harvest. These documents involve more than 18,000 employees ordered to pick cotton. But these represent just a small fraction of the organizations and enterprises that required their employees to pick cotton or pay for replacement workers. UGF interviews, field observations, and dozens of complaints sent to Ozodlik and other media by employees, indicate that hundreds of businesses and organizations across the country sent their employees to pick cotton.**
  
- ▶ **There was wide variation in the length of time people picked cotton— some worked for the entire season and others just a few days. Anyone forced to work is considered a forced laborer,**



but in trying to understand the scale of the problem and how to resolve it, it would also be useful to consider the length of time each was forced to work.

- ▶ Replacement pickers often worked most of the season. A replacement picker who worked for two months could be paid for by a single employee or groups of employees who each paid to cover their shift.
- ▶ The scale of forced labor shifts dramatically over the course of the cotton season, with a majority of voluntary pickers during the first pass and the use of forced labor increasing as the season progresses. For example, some public sector employees picked voluntarily during the first pass and were forced to pick in later stages of the harvest. Who is counted depends on when information is gathered.
- ▶ More people participated in the first pass of the harvest than in later passes, with the total number of pickers dropping across passes. More people participated voluntarily during the first pass than later passes.
- ▶ The government collected a daily total of harvested cotton. The total volume divided by the daily picking average suggests an overall number of pickers per day. For example: The government reported that on November 12, the total amount of cotton harvested across the country was 8,059 tonnes. As of November 12, few if any voluntary pickers remained in the fields. Pickers could pick on average from 10-20 kilograms per day, meaning that approximately 400,000-800,000 people picked cotton that day, the significant majority of whom were forced.

2018 йил ҳосилдан тайёрланган пахта дом-ашёси тўғрисида  
12 ноябрь ҳолатига тежкор  
МАЪЛУМОТ

№	Шарқийлик режа тонна	Бир кунда		Маъсум бошдан		Утган кунга нисбатан		
		тонна	%	тонна	%	тонна	%	
1	318300	1145	0,35	291101	91,45	-78	-0,04	
2	246400	659	0,26	221697	89,97	-178	-0,08	
3	240800	557	0,23	213711	88,75	4	0,00	
4	184200	374	0,21	159162	86,41	-35	-0,01	
5	94600	321	0,34	81592	86,25	-51	-0,05	
6	238600	498	0,21	204842	85,85	54	0,03	
7	193600	502	0,26	162623	84,00	-54	-0,03	
8	192500	543	0,28	157682	81,91	5	0,00	
9	208600	687	0,33	143882	68,98	-47	-0,03	
10	234500	484	0,21	149412	63,72	-1	0,00	
11	205000	456	0,22	128044	62,46	-70	-0,04	
12	381300	1400	0,36	233409	61,21	-26	-0,02	
13	219600	433	0,20	124926	56,89	-5	0,00	
	<b>Ўзбекистон Республикаси</b>	<b>2958000</b>	<b>8059</b>	<b>0,27</b>	<b>2272083</b>	<b>76,81</b>	<b>-482</b>	<b>-0,02</b>

<https://www.bbc.com/uzbek/uzbekistan-46183127>, BBC Uzbek Service, November 12, 2018

**Information on the amount of cotton harvested by the regions on November 12, 2018**

№	Region	Quota in tonnes	in one day		from the beginning of the season		compared to the previous day	
			tonnes	percent	tonnes	percent	tonnes	percent
1	Samarkand	318300	1145	0,35	291101	91,45	-78	-0,04
2	Karakalpakstan	246400	659	0,26	221697	89,97	-178	-0,08
3	Navoiy	240800	557	0,23	213711	88,75	4	0,00
4	Qashqadaryo	184200	374	0,34	159162	86,41	-35	-0,01
5	Khwarezm	94600	321	0,53	81592	86,25	-51	-0,05
6	Bukhara	238600	498	0,21	204842	85,85	54	0,03
7	Andijan	193600	502	0,26	162623	84,00	-54	-0,03
8	Surxondaryo	192500	543	0,28	157682	81,91	5	0,00
9	Namangan	208600	687	0,33	143882	68,98	-47	-0,03
10	Syrdaryo	234500	484	0,21	149412	63,72	-1	0,00
11	Jizzakh	205000	456	0,22	128044	62,46	-70	-0,04
12	Fergana	381300	1400	0,36	233409	61,21	-26	-0,02
13	Tashkent	219600	433	0,20	124926	56,89	-5	0,00
	<b>Republic of Uzbekistan</b>	<b>2958000</b>	<b>8059</b>	<b>0,27</b>	<b>2272083</b>	<b>76,81</b>	<b>-482</b>	<b>-0,02</b>

## Systemic Forced Labor Shown through Farm-Level Monitoring

In 2018, UGF conducted farm-level monitoring of 105 farms in the Jizzakh and Fergana regions to assess the use of forced labor throughout the harvest. This monitoring found that while the majority of farms used voluntary labor for the first picking pass, the vast majority—92 farms— used forced labor at later stages in the harvest. These results closely match the conclusions of UGF’s general monitoring as presented above: that voluntary labor drops significantly after the first pass and the government required companies and organizations to provide labor and resources to cover shortfalls.

This farm-level monitoring was conducted for a project, financed and implemented by the IFC, which aimed to create a practical and scalable example of profitable, sustainable cotton production and harvesting in Uzbekistan without the need to use forced labor. Even though the project provided information and training on decent work practices and forced labor as well as technical support designed to ensure that participating farms used only voluntary labor, the farms remained subject to interference and pressure from local officials to fulfill their cotton quotas. These results show the need for reforms that tackle the drivers at the root of forced labor, including the quota system and lack of autonomy for farmers.

### Background

In 2017, the IFC initiated a Sustainable Cotton Supply Chain Development Project on 10 cotton farms to introduce sustainable production methods based on the principles of the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI).<sup>106</sup> One of the Project’s objectives is to test and localize a methodology for implementing a sustainable cotton standard system based on the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) principles with the aim to create conditions for BCI to approve Uzbekistan as a country in which it can license farms producing Better Cotton. It expanded the project to 105 farms—50 in the Pakhtakor and Dustlik districts of the Jizzakh region, and 55 in the Uchkuprik and Oltyaryk districts in the Fergana region— in 2018.<sup>107</sup> In addition to introducing sustainable practices, including decent work standards to farms, the project aimed to test the assurance methodology for verifying compliance with BCI principles in the context of Uzbekistan. In 2018, the IFC project implemented BCI’s standard three-step assurance methodology on the 105 pilot farms, which included an internal assurance system, a second party check by two individual consultants, and a third-party verification by an international auditing firm. In accordance with recommendations made by an outside auditor in 2017, the project also added independent, unannounced monitoring, for which it contracted UGF.<sup>108</sup> Although UGF has never conducted research or monitoring for an outside organization before, after many years of research of human rights problems connected to the cotton harvest, UGF welcomed the opportunity to contribute constructively to an effort to produce and harvest cotton without the use of forced labor.



“All employees of the cadastral office have gone to pick cotton. There is no reception.” Notice on the door of the office of the Department of Land Resources and State Cadaster. Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, November 1, 2018

“Our institution employs about 100 people. In the autumn of 2018, almost all employees went to pick cotton. I was one of 40 employees sent to pick cotton with overnight stays for 20 days from September 18. Out of these 40 employees, only 15 went to pick cotton themselves; the rest hired mardikors (replacement workers – Ed.). The cost of a mardikor is between 40 and 50 thousand soum per day. We stayed in an old kindergarten building. We were later joined by mardikors who were hired by medical workers from the Oltinkul district. The farmer did not prepare any food. We bought food ourselves from what we earned for the cotton we picked. The daily norm was 60 kg per day. We coped with the norm, but we spent more on food than we earned from picking cotton. There is a lot of work in the office, that’s why many hired mardikors. I would also have hired a mardikor, but couldn’t afford 1.5 million soum for 20 days”.

Interview with an employee of the Department of Land Resources and State Cadaster, Andijan city January 16, 2019.

For this monitoring, UGF monitors conducted at least two unannounced visits to each pilot farm, once during the first picking pass, and at least once during the second and/or third passes, and gathered information from farmers, farm workers, and seasonal pickers. UGF also conducted meetings with local residents and employees of public and private sector organizations in the surrounding communities and conducted follow-up farm visits and additional interviews as necessary to corroborate or double check information. The central objective of the monitoring was to determine whether forced labor was used at any stage on project farms. In several cases, monitors encountered interference with their work by security officials, including interrogations, and a threat of violence.

## Definitions Used

**Forced labor/Noncompliance:** People required to pick cotton, or pay for replacement pickers by their employer, generally do so because they fear consequences, especially loss of employment, salary, benefits, or working hours, if they refuse. Being required to pay replacement fees is a form of penalty. The Uzbek government made a policy commitment not to use forced labor in the cotton harvest and specifically to exclude medical and education employees from picking cotton. The farms participating in the Project were not supposed to use employees of public organizations or replacement pickers hired by public organizations or companies and efforts were undertaken to ensure participating farms had agreements with groups of confirmed unemployed, local, voluntary pickers. Based on these considerations, where UGF monitoring found that employees of an organization or company or replacement workers hired by them, or military recruits, law enforcement officers, or other public sector employees were picking cotton on a pilot farm, UGF made a preliminary finding of noncompliance with the Project's requirement that participating farms use only voluntary labor. In addition to interviews with pickers, farm workers, and others, UGF gathered video and photographic evidence to corroborate results, including photographs of employees picking cotton in uniforms that identified them as working for a specific company or utility, and buses identifying the company bringing workers to the fields.

**Voluntary labor/Compliance:** In 2018, mahalla officials were responsible for organizing brigades of unemployed people to pick cotton in both the Fergana and Jizzakh regions. Some unemployed people who were mobilized by mahalla officials were victims of forced labor because they were directly threatened with loss of child or welfare benefits administered by the mahalla council to compel them to work.<sup>109</sup> However, in the absence of specific evidence of forced labor among mahalla pickers on a pilot farm, UGF made a preliminary assumption that these pickers were voluntary.

**Additional Corroboration:** UGF used additional information to confirm or revise these preliminary determinations. For example, on one project farm in Fergana, monitors found that teachers from a nearby school picked cotton from mid-October to the end of the harvest, triggering a preliminary finding that the farm was noncompliant. However, a monitor visited the school and interviewed several teachers who told her that the farmer provided firewood and other material assistance to the school. When teachers learned that the farmer could not find enough labor to harvest his crop, they began picking on his farm voluntarily. Based on this additional information, the finding was changed to compliant.

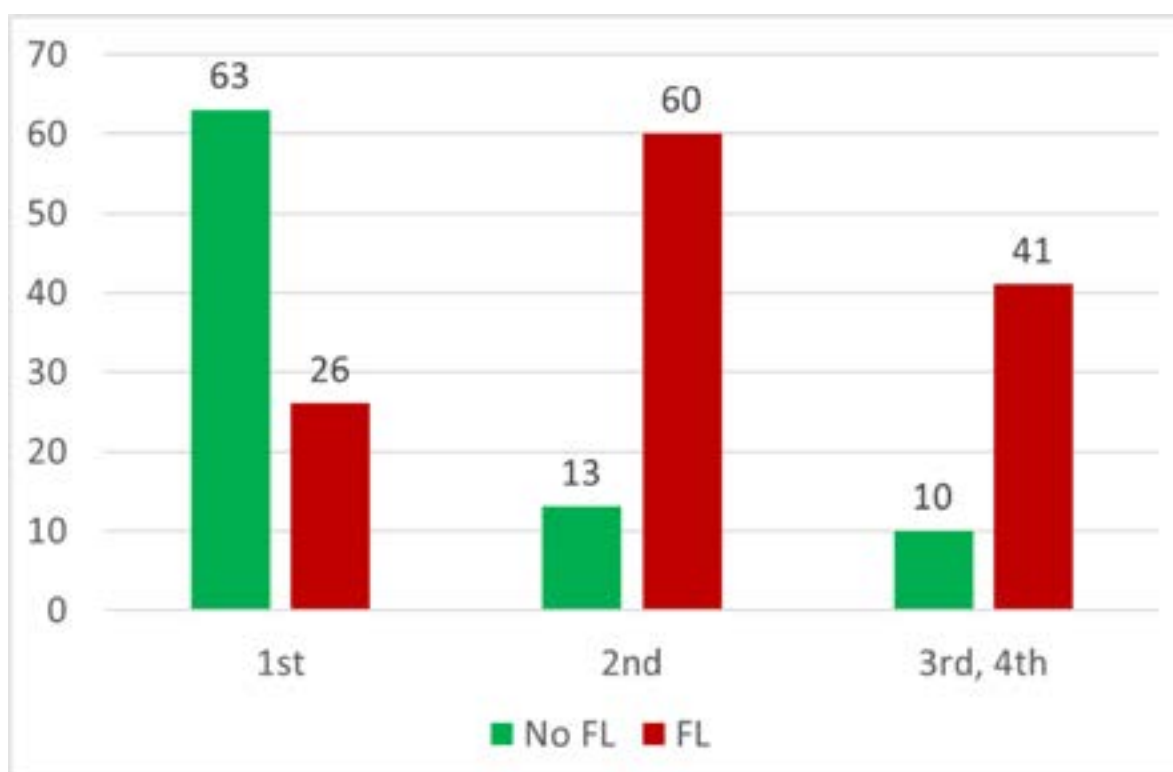
## Monitoring Results

A small number of pilot farms used only voluntary labor to pick cotton in 2018. The majority of farms in all four districts used forced labor or a combination of voluntary and forced labor, with important differences between Jizzakh and Fergana.

### Overview of compliance with forced labor requirement by district

District	Participating Farms	Compliant		Noncompliant		Dropped Out	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Pakhtakor	30	0	0%	30	100%		
Dustlik	20	2	10%	18	90%		
Uchkuprik	24	5	20.83%	19	79.16%		
Oltyaryk	31	6	19.35%	24	77.41%	1	3.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12.38%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>87.61%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.95%</b>

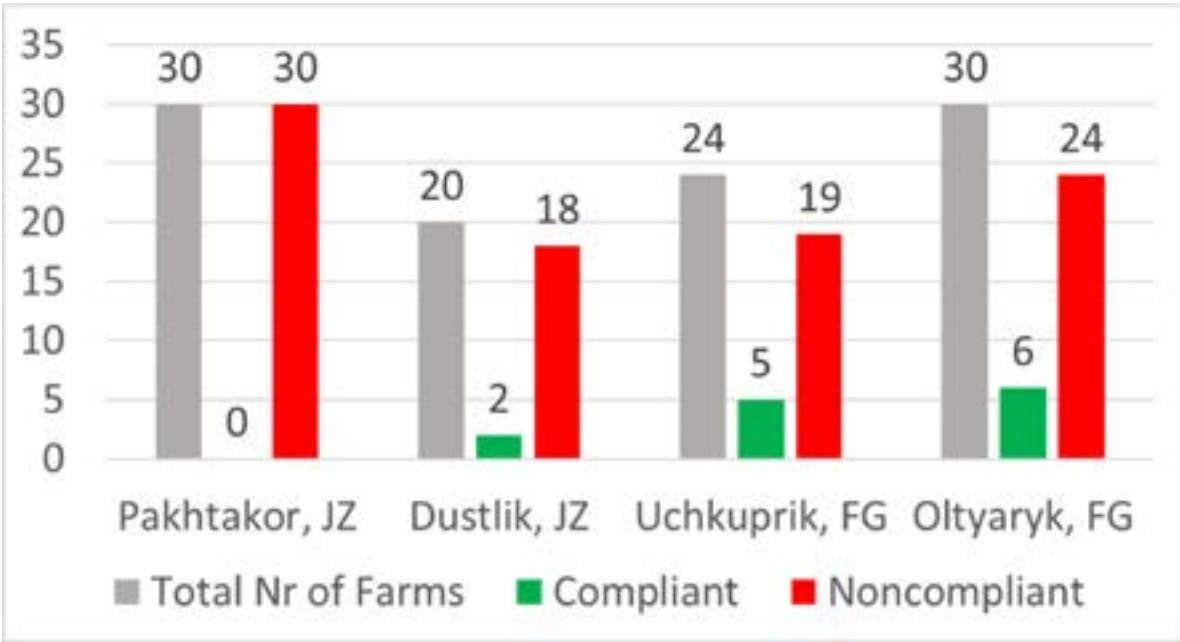
### Use of forced labor on pilot farms by picking pass



A close look at the data shows that the use of forced labor on pilot farms in both regions was closely linked to the picking pass although again, with key differences between Jizzakh and Fergana. As in UGF's general monitoring, monitoring of pilot farms showed that as earning potential dropped, the number of voluntary workers also dropped.

The Project analyzed picker data from all participating farms in one district (referred to as a Producer Unit, or PU) each in Jizzakh and Fergana and found that approximately 68% of all pickers on the Producer Unit in Jizzakh were mobilized involuntarily and 17% of all pickers on the Producer Unit in Fergana were mobilized involuntarily.<sup>110</sup>

**Use of forced labor on all pilot farms by district**



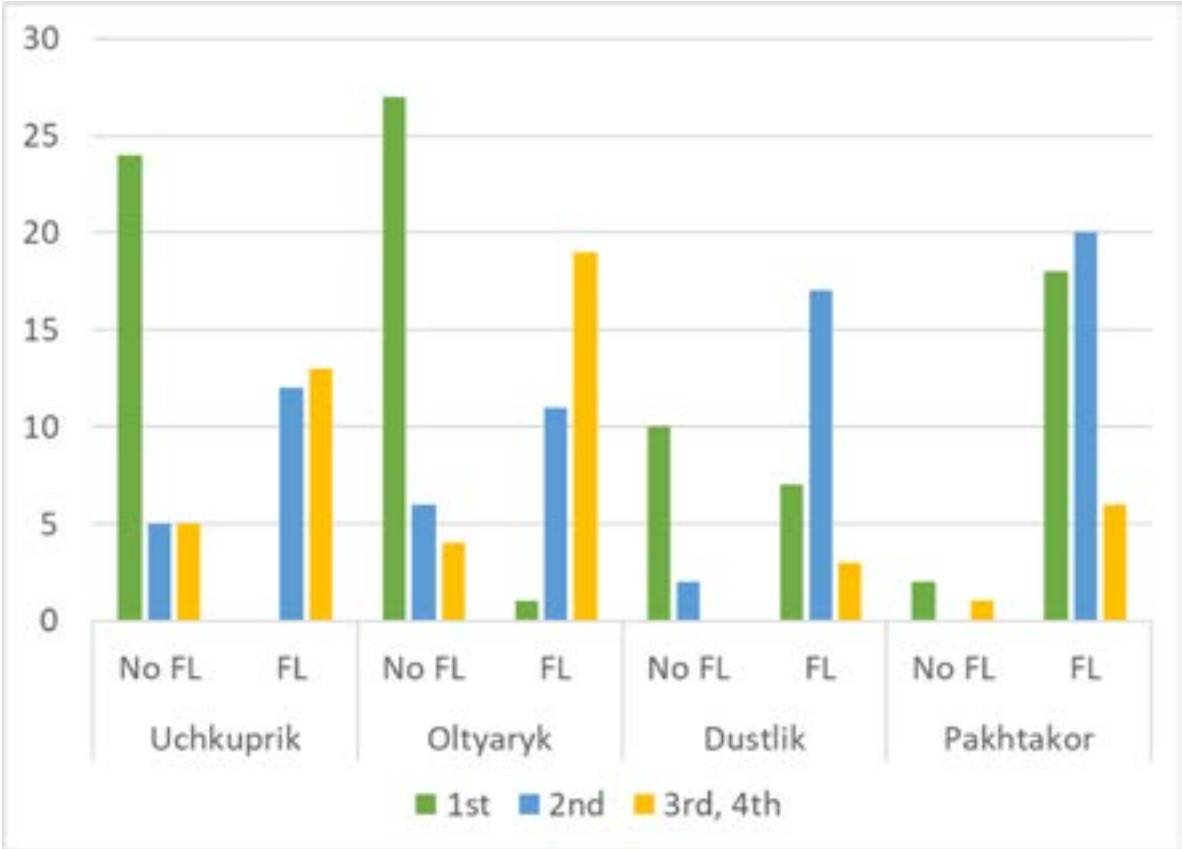
In both the Jizzakh and Fergana regions, voluntary pickers included:

- ① farm workers and members of their families who regularly perform seasonal work for the farm in exchange for use of plots of land, in-kind payments of grain, other food products, hay, fuel (cotton stalks), and money;
- ② local pickers, mainly women, who live near the farms and regularly pick cotton for money, sometimes mobilized or organized by their mahallas; these are among the most productive and motivated pickers; and
- ③ unemployed people.

Some people who were forcibly required to pick cotton by their employers hired replacement pickers and some businesses sent replacement pickers instead of their employees. Although the replacement pickers themselves worked voluntarily, they signify the presence of forced labor, since being required to pay for a replacement worker is a form of penalty on people who did not want to pick cotton. UGF has found that unemployed pickers preferred to be hired as replacement pickers because they received a daily replacement fee in addition to payment for the cotton they picked. In Jizzakh,

involuntary pickers were generally employees of large enterprises, banks, public sector organizations, except health and education sectors, employees of businesses or replacement pickers hired by them, and military conscripts.<sup>111</sup> In Fergana, involuntary pickers were generally public sector employees, including from the health and education sectors, banks, and employees of businesses or replacement pickers paid for by them. Major enterprises and public sector organizations from Fergana were also mobilized and sent to other regions or districts to work.

**Use of forced labor on pilot farms by district and picking pass**



**Jizzakh**

In Jizzakh, only two pilot farms, both in Dustlik, used only voluntary labor throughout the cotton harvest; all 48 other participating farms used forced labor at some stage of the harvest. Monitors documented two issues with respect to forced labor that affected these farms. As a low population region, Jizzakh was the recipient of thousands of mobilized brigades from other regions in Uzbekistan sent to pick cotton in Jizzakh from the beginning of the season.<sup>112</sup> These were comprised of employees or replacement pickers mobilized from large enterprises and organizations, including brigades from Uzdonmakhsulot, the



national grain enterprise, alcohol and wine producers, utility companies, banks, and public sector organizations such as firefighters and the tax inspectorate. While some of these internal migrants were groups of voluntary, unemployed workers, many of them were employees forced to pick by enterprises and organizations or replacement workers hired by them.<sup>113</sup>

Officials, faced with the presence of thousands of workers from other regions in their districts, then allocated these workers among farms, including pilot farms, apparently without first considering the availability of local voluntary labor. As a result, this disqualified these farms from compliance with the Project's requirements. This was the case for 25 of 30 pilot farms in Pakhtakor and 7 of 20 pilot farms in Dustlik, which all used pickers from grain mills and other public enterprises and organizations, in addition to local brigades of voluntary pickers, from the beginning of the harvest.

As found elsewhere, the amount of local voluntary labor declined after the first pass as weather worsened and available cotton to pick diminished. In such cases it appeared that local officials allocated mobilized groups to pick on farms that needed to meet their quotas, including pilot farms. Therefore, all but two pilot farms that used voluntary picking groups for the first pass, resorted to forced labor for the remaining passes.

One of the two compliant farms has fields adjacent to a mahalla and used voluntary pickers who lived there. According to interviews with pickers, this proximity and the farm's existing relationship with the mahalla residents were key to the farm's ability to attract voluntary labor. The farm's proximity to the mahalla meant that neither the farmers nor the pickers had to organize or pay for transport or food, and pickers could come and go as needed. Pickers also said that the farmer had a good reputation and paid wages on time. The other compliant farm used its own employees and two brigades of voluntary pickers from another district who came to the farm each day by bus. The farm stopped picking after the second pass even though it had only fulfilled 85% of its quota, simply because there was no cotton left. The decision not to pick late in the season may have been a factor in avoiding using forced labor.

## Fergana

In contrast with Jizzakh, Fergana is a high population district, generally considered to have sufficient labor to pick cotton locally and also send detachments of pickers to other regions.<sup>114</sup> All but one pilot farm used picking brigades of voluntary pickers, mainly from the mahallas near the farms, to pick the first pass. Thus, 53 of 54 pilot farms or 98 percent, were compliant throughout the first pass.

After the first pass and as the weather worsened, officials began to forcibly mobilize public sector employees, including health and education employees. Of the 19 noncompliant pilot farms in In Uchkuprik, 16 used employees from the health and education sector to pick cotton. Of the 24 noncompliant pilot farms in Oltyaryk, 22 used employees from the health and education sectors. Those who did not want to pick cotton had to hire replacement workers. Shopkeepers and business owners also reported that they had to provide employees or pay for replacement workers to pick cotton. By mid-October there was broad mobilization of school and kindergarten employees, health workers, utility employees, and other public sector workers, employees of banks and businesses or replacements hired by them. Generally, these organizations were required to send a group of employees to pick cotton during the week in rotating shifts of two to 10 days (both locally and with overnight stays farther from home) and to send all employees on the weekends.



Living quarters for cotton pickers  
October 18, Tashkent region

## Conclusions

There were major structural impediments to implementing the Project without forced labor, despite training and technical assistance provided to farmers.

- ▶ The quota system is a major driver of forced labor;
- ▶ Effective recruitment practices for voluntary cotton picking are not in place;
- ▶ Farmers lack autonomy over decision making related to cotton production, including recruitment of temporary seasonal labor;
- ▶ Farmers and farm workers, including temporary seasonal labor, do not have effective channels for negotiating picking rates and conditions or for resolving disputes and obtaining remedies.

The results of the 2017-2018 pilot implementation of the sustainable cotton standard system and the findings by UGF's independent monitoring of the pilot farms were discussed with industry stakeholders (the government, the private sector, local activists and international NGOs) at a Project Consultative Council Meeting held in Tashkent in February 2019.<sup>115</sup> The Project Consultative Council decided:

- a To formally invite BCI to engage more deeply and openly with the project in Uzbekistan. This invitation would represent a first step toward eventually having licensed Better Cotton farms. Feeding into this decision were discussions on the emerging needs of private enterprises, as well as recommendations developed by a working group of Decent Work specialists.
- b To continue building the foundation for a credible and scalable system for Better Cotton in Uzbekistan that meets the requirements of the BCI Principles and Criteria, going forward the Consultative Council recommends working with cotton producers that operate outside of the government procurement plan since producers need to have autonomy to make decisions with respect to their operations. In parallel, a roadmap has to be developed to ensure the Better Cotton Standard System can be implemented in its entirety and true to its intent within the context of Uzbekistan's local conditions.

Additional recommendations to achieve Decent Work requirements focus on:

- 1 Empowering workers and farmers to negotiate working conditions and resolve disputes;
- 2 Further strengthening capacity building and training activities focused on Decent Work practices which include temporary seasonal labor in addition to regular farm workers;
- 3 Introducing grievance mechanisms for complaints at the farm and Project levels and ensuring the appropriate training on how to use them.

## The Way Forward to End Systemic Forced Labor

Through all its monitoring work in 2018, UGF documented evidence that forced labor occurred in 2018 not simply because of uneven implementation of policy or local management practices, but because of a system that tolerates, perpetuates and incentivizes the use of forced labor. Despite recent policy reforms and success in reducing forced labor, the fundamental structures of this system, especially the centrally-imposed quota system, remain in place. The government faces shortfalls in labor from the beginning of the harvest in low population regions and in all regions when the amount of voluntary labor declines after the first pass. It extorts public organizations and enterprises to provide labor and resources to make up for these structural shortages.

Many have long pinned their hopes on mechanization and, more recently, privatization, to end forced labor, and these can certainly comprise key parts of the solution. However, a vital part of any solution to the problem of forced labor lies in strengthening protection for human rights. According to official estimates, some 2.6 million people picked cotton in 2018, the majority of them voluntary workers who rely on cotton picking as source of income. Cotton picking is an important form of employment, particularly for rural women. Problems arise when people are forced to do this work or extorted to pay for it; when conditions are poor or abusive; when workers, including temporary pickers, cannot negotiate for fair wages and acceptable working conditions or receive remediation for grievances; and when a lack of transparency and accountability promote corruption and incentive violations.

The government must fully end systemic forced labor and should urgently enact structural reforms to address its underlying drivers, as well as implement fair and transparent recruitment systems for temporary seasonal labor. As it moves to privatize the cotton sector, the government should also allow farmers autonomy and safeguard the protection of labor rights by implementing policy reforms to ensure transparency and accountability, and to empower civil society and workers' organizations.<sup>116</sup>

## Government organization of forced labor

UGF found other evidence of government-organized forced labor in addition to the incentive to use forced labor inherent in the quota system:

- ▶ Mobilization from enterprises and from regional and district officials refer to a Cabinet of Ministers decree on the organization of the harvest. The decree is not publicly available.
- ▶ Oversight of cotton production and allocation of labor is in the hands of officials who wield coercive power over farmers and cotton pickers. Cotton production remains under direct control of the local administration and law enforcement agencies. Agricultural lands in each district are divided into four “sectors,” each under the control of an official: district hokim; district police chief; district prosecutor; and head of the district tax inspectorate, who bear day-to-day responsibility for oversight of cotton production and implementation of quotas.
- ▶ The large movement of pickers among regions suggests an element of central organization and/or direction.
- ▶ Mobilization of law enforcement cadets and employees, military recruits, and employees of emergency services could not have occurred without approval of the central authorities.
- ▶ National enterprises sent employees to the fields from the beginning of the harvest despite the financial burden, showing the role of the central government in the mobilization of pickers.
- ▶ Law enforcement officials are responsible for oversight and implementation of cotton quotas—a role fundamentally at odds with their responsibility to enforce laws to prevent and punish forced labor

**Approved**  
**Deputy Hokim of the Namangan region, R.Kurbanov**  
**November, 2018**

**Cotton submitting quota**  
**by regional organizations**

No.	Name of enterprise and organization	Number of workers (persons)	Submitted until November 27 in KG	Submitted until November 27 in tons
<b>Total in the region</b>		<b>7,237</b>	<b>759,885</b>	<b>760</b>

**Departments and organizations under the Secretariat of economics and business**

1	Regional Tax Department	110	11,550	11.6
2	Regional Employment Office under hokimiyat	23	2,415	2.4
3	«Uzagrosugurta» Insurance company	17	1,785	1.8
4	Extra-budgetary Pension Fund Office	19	1,995	2.0
5	Communication, Computerization, and Telecommunication Technologies Department	4	420	0.4
6	Regional Market Association	10	1,050	1.1
7	«Uzbekiston pochta» regional branch	35	3,675	3.7
8	Namangan branch of «Uzbektelekom»	91	9,555	9.6
9	«Kafolat» insurance company	12	1,260	1.3
10	Regional Headquarters of the Central Bank	93	9,765	9.8
11	«Agrobank» regional branch	80	8,400	8.4
12	«Asakabank» regional branch	66	6,930	6.9
13	«Turonbank» regional branch	42	4,410	4.4
14	«Ipoteabank» regional branch	57	5,985	6.0
15	“Khamkorrbank” regional branch	89	9,345	9.3
16	«Khalkbank» regional branch	81	8,505	8.5
17	«Promstroybank» regional branch	65	6,825	6.8
18	«Ippak yuli bank» regional branch	67	7,035	7.0
19	«Savdogarbank» regional branch	40	4,200	4.2
20	«Microcreditbank» regional branch	69	7,245	7.2
21	«Milliybank» regional branch	91	9,555	9.6
22	«Trustbank» regional branch	70	7,350	7.4

23	«Alokabank» regional branch	68	7,140	7.1
24	«Kishlokkurilishbank» regional branch	66	6,930	6.9
25	«Capitalbank» regional branch	60	6,300	6.3
26	«Namangan Avtotechkhizmat» JSC	161	16,905	16.9
27	«Chust Avtotechkhizmat» LLC	80	8,400	8.4
28	Namangan AVTO savdo LLC	25	2,625	2.6
29	«As-Namanganservice» LLC	14	1,470	1.5
30	«Vodiy avtotechservice» LLC	8	840	0.8
31	«Dustlik avtotechservice» LLC	13	1,365	1.4
32	«Vodiy sakhovati agro-invest ulgurji savdo» LLC	11	1,155	1.2
33	«Yuksalish ulgurji savdo export» LLC	24	2,520	2.5
34	«Namanganulgurchi invest» LLC	19	1,955	2.0
35	«Namanganozik-ovkat» LLC	18	1,890	1.9
36	Regional Statistical Office	52	5,460	5.5
37	Regional Finance Department	35	3,675	3.7
38	Regional Control-Revision Department	19	1,955	2.0
39	Regional Treasury Office	38	3,990	4.0
40	Regional Department of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic	21	2,205	2.2
41	«Infinbank» regional branch	41	4,515	4.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>210,630</b>	<b>210.6</b>

#### Departments and organizations under the Secretariat of agriculture and water management

1	«Agrokhimzaschita» JSC	70	7,350	7.4
2	Namangan Regional Farmers Council	9	945	0.9
3	Namangan Center on Animal Disease Diagnostics	10	1,050	1.1
4	Namangan regional Department on Veterinary Medicine		1,785	1.8
5	Namangan Regional Department on Agriculture and Water Management	34	3,570	3.6
6	Department of «Naryn-Syrdarya» Basin Irrigation System (together with the Department on pumping stations, energy and	193	210,265	20.3

	communication, 9-directorate, Land Reclamation Department)			
7	Head of Namangan branch of Regional Cotton Station	16	1,680	1.7
8	Regional Cotton Seed Association	41	4,305	4.3
9	Regional Forest Department	86	9,030	9.0
10	Regional Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection	138	14,490	14.5
11	«Uzkishlokkhujalikmashleasing» Regional branch	12	1,260	1.3
12	«Popdonmukhsulotlari» JSC	217	22,785	22.8
13	«Namangan Agropilla» LLC together with silk cocoon processing enterprises	7	735	0.7
14	Namangan Regional Department of Land Resources And State Cadaster	12	1,260	1.3
15	«Namangandonmakhsulotlari» JSC	306	32,130	32.1
16	«Namangan Tola Textile» LLC	307	32,235	32.2
17	Regional Land and Property Cadaster Company	30	3,150	3.2
18	«Uchkurgondonmakhsulotlari» JSC	562	59,010	59.0
19	«Uchkurgonyog» JSC	638	66,990	67.0
20	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,705</b>	<b>284,025</b>	<b>284.0</b>

**Departments and organizations under the sector of youth policy, social development and ideological affairs**

1	«Dori-darmon» Regional LLC	52	5,460	5.5
2	Regional Archives Department	4	420	0.4
3	Regional Department of Culture under the <i>hokimiyat</i>	11	1,155	1.2
4	Regional <i>kengash</i> [trans. - meeting] of Youth Union	20	2,100	2.1
5	Namangan Regional Department of «Mahallah» Charity Fund	27	2,835	2.8
6	“Vatanparvar” Uzbek Defence Auxiliary Association	15	1,575	1.6
7	Namangan Regional Association of Trade Unions	36	3,780	3.8
8	State Unitary Enterprise under the regional <i>hokimiyat</i> «Centre of horticulture development»	5	525	0.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>17,850</b>	<b>17.9</b>

**Organizations under the secretariat of industrial development, capital development, public utilities**

1	District Road Construction Companies «Namanganavtoyul»	50	5,250	5.3
2	«Uzbekiston khavo yullari» Namangan Airport	338	35,490	35.5
3	Central Architecture and Construction Department	46	4,830	4.8



4	Engineering company of a single customer of regional hokimiyat	52	5,460	5.5
5	Namangan regional branch of «Kishlok Kurilish invest» engineering company	62	6,510	6.5
6	Regional Office of State Expertise	7	735	0.7
7	«Namanganavtoyul» Regional organization together with district branches	35	3,675	3.7
8	State inspection on Architecture and Construction control	19	1,995	2.0
9	Namangan regional department «Vodiygaztaminot» together with district departments	81	8,505	8.5
10	«Turakurgan oil depot» Unitary Enterprise	786	82,530	82.5
11	Namangan regional branch of «Vtorchermet»	81	8,505	5.5
12	«Namangan electr tarmoklari» JSC together with district departments	100	10,500	10.5
13	Head of Regional Department of Standardization and Metrology	9	945	0.9
14	Centre [test lab] for Certification and Metrology	41	4,305	4.3
15	Namangan Regional Department of «Uzneftegazinspektion»	11	1,155	1.2
16	Head of «Vodokanal» State Enterprise	82	8,610	8.6
17	«Issyklik manbai» Regional Production Association	199	20,895	20.9
18	Housing authority of public utilities	69	7,245	7.2
19	State Housing Fund Management Department under regional hokimiyat	12	1,260	1.3
20	Namanganvino JSC	192	20,160	20.2
21	Railway Fuel Supply Department	20	2,100	2.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,292</b>	<b>240,660</b>	<b>240.7</b>

**Departments and organizations under the secretariat of Namangan regional hokimiyat on investments, innovations, privatized enterprises cooperation, free economic zones and small industrial zones, as well as tourism development**

1	<b>Regional Department of Investments</b>	24	2,520	2.5
2	<b>Authorized representative for Namangan region of the State Committee of Tourism Development in the Republic of Uzbekistan</b>	2	210	0.2
3	<b>Namangan Regional Department of the State Committee for cooperation with privatized enterprises and development of competitiveness</b>	38	3,990	4.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>6,720</b>	<b>6.7</b>

**Note: calculated based on 15 kilograms per day for the period of 7 days per each employee of the organization**



**Order No. 878, “On the organization of the harvesting of raw cotton in 2018”, signed by T. Azamatov, Acting Chairman of the Board of the Joint Stock Company “Uzmetkombinat” September 19, Bekabad city, Tashkent region**

On the basis of protocol No. 01-03/1-3276 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan of September 10, 2018

Decision No. 689 of the hokim of the Tashkent region of September 4, 2018

Letter No. 1/2-2488 of August 10, 2018 and No. 1/2-2913 of September 17, 2018, from the hokim of the city of Bekabad, to assist the Bekabad district in harvesting cotton in 2018

AGREED with Trade Union Committee Chairman A. Uzakov

“I order from September 21, 2018, to organize the departure of 3,200 people (in accordance with Appendix No. 1) to the farms in the Bekabad district to harvest raw cotton with an overnight stay, including:

- 1,500 employees from the company, including 200 members of maintenance personnel;
- 1,700 recruited persons. All costs associated with the preparation and organization of the cotton 2018 are to be attributed to the general industrial costs of “Uzmetkombinat”.

On October 13, 2018, Nematulla Abdullayev, hokim of the Bekabad district, along with another four district hokims of the Tashkent region, were fined two months' salary for “poor organization” of cotton harvest.

### **The consequences**

#### **Seven Children Wrongly Vaccinated While Nurse is Sent to Pick Cotton**

The children's clinic at the Metallurg Hospital, which belongs to the Metallurgical Kombinat, sent a nurse, Saodat Kabulova, to pick cotton for three days from 25-27 October, 2018. Saodat Kabulova received an order to go to pick cotton by text message at 11 p.m. on October 24. When she returned to work on October 29, she discovered that seven children aged 3–6 years old had been incorrectly vaccinated. The children had been vaccinated against hepatitis B instead of hepatitis A. The nurse, fearing serious consequences, reported the incident to the parents of the children and the media.

<http://uzbekgermanforum.org/seven-children-wrongly-vaccinated-while-nurse-is-sent-to-pick-cotton/>

Note: On September 26, 2018, Nematulla Abdullayev was appointed hokim of the Bekabad district. He previously served as hokim of the Parkent district of the Tashkent region. In October 2017, in a tirade lasting 45 minutes, he verbally abused and humiliated the heads of state institutions, including schools, kindergartens and hospitals, for failing to bring enough employees to pick cotton. <http://harvestreport.uzbekgermanforum.org/uzbek-official-unleashes-torrent-of-abuse-at-cotton-meeting/>

## Order of the Head of Department of Culture of the Jizzakh region on sending workers from cultural institutions to pick cotton



©BBC Uzbek Service

Order referring to the Protocol of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan dated September 10, 2018

“Following the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 10, 2018, entitled ‘Measures for timely, high-quality cotton harvest without losses’, we ask you to submit a list of employees for voluntary participation in the cotton harvest by September 15, 2018.”

Signed by Kamol Farhadov, head of the Department of Culture of the Jizzakh region

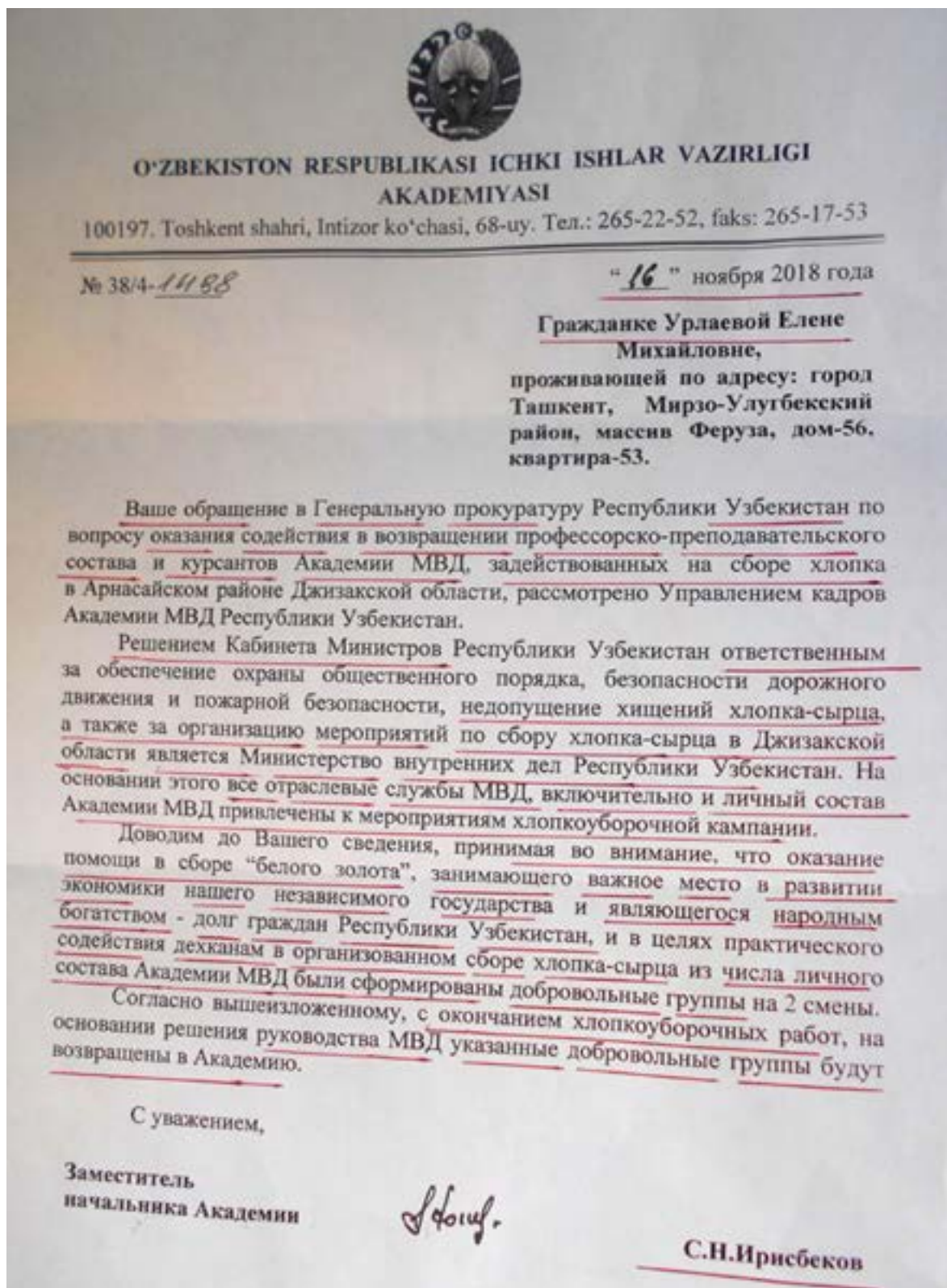
### The consequences

105 workers from cultural institutions, including musicians and actors, were ordered to pick cotton in the Pakhtakor district of the Jizzakh region. “Employees who have not picked 70 kg of cotton are abused and humiliated in front of the others. Those who have picked little cotton are forced to do hard work such as chopping firewood. How can those whose work is to play musical instruments collect 70 kg of cotton a day?”

Source: BBC interview, September 28, 2018

<https://www.bbc.com/uzbek/uzbekistan-45672871>

**Letter from S. N. Irisbekov, Deputy Head of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**



**Letter from S. N. Irisbekov, Deputy Head of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, November 16, 2018**

“According to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan is responsible for the prevention of the theft of raw cotton, as well as for the organization of activities related to harvesting raw cotton in the Jizzakh region. On that basis, all specialized services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the personnel of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are involved in activities relating to the cotton harvest.”

**The consequences**

“We are writing from the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan. We have had no peace since the start of the cotton-picking season. We cadets are dressed in civilian clothes and taken to the cotton fields. Well, if it is necessary for the prosperity of the country, then we will pick cotton, but the bad thing is that we have a daily quota to pick—100 kilograms. It’s not easy to pick so much cotton. And the worst thing is that those who do not fulfill the quota are forced to write an explanatory letter addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs. It’s not fair to expel cadets from the academy because of cotton, to shame our parents! If necessary, we are ready to sacrifice our life for the Motherland. But we’d like to show our skills on the battlefield, not on the cotton fields...”

Letter from cadets, October 2, 2018


Source: Radio Ozodlik

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxtagram-toshkent-iiv/29521108.html>

“When the cotton season begins, to be honest, I want to quit my job. I had to hire two pickers. I also had to assist two farmers every evening with bringing cotton to the gin. By the end of the harvest, it was still necessary to hand over cotton late at night. This is ridiculous. Out of these 100 kg, probably only 30 kg of it was cotton. The rest is just stalks and rubbish. I don’t understand the benefits of picking that kind of cotton. During the harvest, I do not do my own job preventing crime. I don’t go around my precinct because I am busy with cotton work and meetings in the hokimiyat. But if a crime happens, they would not take into account that it was them who sent me to the cotton. I hardly see my children during the cotton harvest. I sit in meetings until late at night. When I come home they are asleep. When I leave early in the morning, they are still sleeping. It would be good if everyone just did their own work.”

UGF interview with police officer, Kushkupir district, Khorezm region, November 25, 2018

Decree No. 01.7.07/9613 by Uzbekenergo, a state-owned joint-stock company, on mobilizing employees of „Surkhandarya TPS“ (Thermal Power Station), September 17, 2018, Termez city

<p>ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ АКЦИОНЕРНАЯ КОМПАНИЯ «УЗБЕКЭНЕРГО»</p> <p>ОАО СУРХАНДАРЬИНСКОЕ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЕ ТЕРРИТОРИАЛЬНЫХ ЭЛЕКТРИЧЕСКИХ СЕТЕЙ</p>		<p>«O'ZBEKENERGO» DAVLAT AKSIYADORLIK KOMPANIYASI</p> <p>SURXONDARYO HUDUDIY ELEKTR TARMOQLARI KORXONASI OCHIQ AKSIYADORLIK JAMIYATI</p>
<p><b>КЎРСАТМА УКАЗАНИЕ</b></p>		
<p>« 17 » 09 2018 й. 01-7107/9613 сонли Термиз ш.</p>		
<p><b>“Пахта-2018” йигим-терим мавсумига ходимларни жалб қилиш тўғрисида</b></p>		
<p>Вилоят ҳокимлигида қишлоқ хўжалиги масалаларига бағишлаб ўтказилган 2018 йил 11 сентябрдаги № 05-01/296 сонли селектор йиғилиш баённомаси ва вилоят ҳокимининг “2018 йил пахта йигимига қатнашадиган теримчилар билан ўз вақтида ҳисоб-китоб қилиш ҳамда терим отрядлари раҳбарларини моддий рағбатлантириш чора-тадбирлари тўғрисида” ги Ф-244 сонли фармойиши ва вилоят Ҳокимлигининг “Сурхондарё ХЭТК” АЖ ходимларини пахта йигим-теримига жалб қилиш ҳақида берилган топшириқларини бажариш мақсадида,</p>		
<p><b>ЮКЛАТИЛАДИ:</b></p>		
<p><b>1. Хизматгоҳ , ТЭТК ва ШЭТК бошлиқларига;</b></p>		
<p>1.1.Бўлим ва хизматгоҳлар, ҳамда шаҳар ва туман электр таъминоти корхоналаридан пахта-йигим теримига жалб қилинган ходимларнинг пахта терими мавсуми даврида хавфсизлигини таъминлаш учун улар устидан доимий назорат олиб борилсин.</p>		
<p><b>Муддат: Пахта йигими мавсумида</b></p>		
<p><b>2. Ходимлар бўлими бошлиғи Ҳ.Умаровга, Пахта йигим-теримига жалб қилинадиган ходимларнинг рўйхати тузилиб, тасдиқлансин.</b></p>		
<p><b>Муддат: 2018 йил 17 сентябргача</b></p>		
<p><b>3. Умумий масалалар бўйича директор А.Жумаевга.</b></p>		
<p>3.1. Хизматгоҳ шаҳар ва туман электр таъминоти корхонаси ходимлари учун ажратилган ётоқ жойларни таъмирлаб, уларнинг дам олиши ва овқатланишлари учун шарт-шароитлар яратилсин;</p>		
<p>3.2. Пахта йигим теримига жалб қилинган хизматгоҳ, шаҳар ва туман электр таъминоти корхонаси ходимларини шахсан ўзлари қатнашиши учун</p>		

**Government organizations for electricity, gas, water, coal mining and other utilities throughout the country sent their workers to pick cotton under the threat of punishment.**

Decree No. 01.7.07/9613 by Uzbekenergo, a state-owned joint-stock company, on mobilizing employees of „Surkhandarya TPS“ (Thermal Power Station), September 17, 2018, Termez city

Protocol of the meeting of the regional hokimiyat No. 05- 01/296 regarding issues of agriculture

Decision of the regional hokim No F- 244 „On measures for timely payment of labor to the collectors and for material incentives for the heads of the pickers' teams participating in the harvesting of cotton.“

And instructions of the Surhandarya regional hokimiyat

### **The consequences**

„Everything remains as before - we were told to write a statement on voluntary participation in the harvesting of cotton and prepare a list of pickers. Living conditions are very poor there and they need to make repairs. The workers will live in a derelict room at school # 17 in the Ulugnor district and the repairs will be carried out at the expense of workers.“

Employee of Andijan Electrical Networks, September 12, 2018

Source: Radio Ozodlik

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxta-2018-andijon-uzbektelekom-elektr-viloyat-hokimi/29486018.html>

“All day long we are in cold fields, picking cotton and branches and barely harvest 10 kg a day. Then the weight is reduced to 6 kg at the cotton plant. If you multiply 950 by 6, you get 5,700 soum. We spend 6,000 soum on food per day and in total pay 16,000 soum including rent. Each picker has a debt of 100,000-150,000 soum. The housing is cold and the water is icy in the morning. We are worse than slaves, because slaves at least are fed. And we remain in debt. We will not be returned until the regional hokim allows us. He drives along the fields in the Buka district in a black Captiva car to observe us slaves.”

Letter from an employee of Angren Electrical Network, November 16, 2018

Source: Radio Ozodlik

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxta-majburiy-mehnat/29604605.html>





Detachments No. 248 and 289, made up of employees of the O‘zbekko‘mir Joint-Stock Company, Angren division. List of 248 mobilized employees sent to pick cotton in the Buka district. October 6, 2018

**The consequences**

“The prosecutor of the city of Angren visited us and held a meeting at which he demanded that the daily quota should not be less than 70 kilograms.”

An employee of O‘zbekko‘mir who was forcibly sent from Angren to pick cotton in the Buka district of the Tashkent region.

Interview with Elena Urlaeva, October 6, 2018

**Telephone message to the heads of 13 enterprises belonging to the Joint-Stock Company “Uzsharobsanoat,”**

**ТЕЛЕФОНОГРАММА**

“Ўзшаробсаноат” акциядорлик жамиятида 2018 йил 10 сентябрь куни кенгайтирилган тарзда ўтказилган йиғилиш 98-сон баёнига асосан Жиззах вилояти Дўстлик туманида Сизнинг корхонангиз томонидан 100 нафардан иборат терим отрядларини ташкил этиш белгиланган бўлсада, бугунги кунда теримчилар сони 10 нафарга камайтирилган.

Сиздан зудлик билан жорий йил 24 октябрь куни соат 19:00 кадар терим отрядларини теримчилар билан тўлиқ шакллантиришингизни ва пахта штабига шахсан етиб боришингизни сўраймиз.

Бошқарув раисининг  
биринчи ўринбосари

  
Т.Умаров

“Ўзшаробсаноат” АЖ  
Тошкент ш., Абай 6  
тел: 71-244-02-23

№ Т.У-02-08/3486  
2018 йил 24 октябрь

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. “Элсун шароб” МЧЖ        | 8. “Бону-Галдин” МЧЖ        |
| 2. “Арко-Стайл” ҚҚ          | 9. “Афсона шароб” МЧЖ       |
| 3. “Хамкор-Осиё” МЧЖ        | 10. “Комсар” МЧЖ            |
| 4. “Фаровон” МЧЖ            | 11. “Ўзбекистон шампани” АЖ |
| 5. “Денов вино-арок” АЖ     | 12. “Кўконспирт” АЖ         |
| 6. “САВБ” МЧЖ               | 13. “Мастона” АЖ            |
| 7. “Шахрисабз вино-арок” АЖ |                             |



sof.uz

**Telephone message to the heads of 13 enterprises belonging to the Joint-Stock Company “Uzsharobsanoat,” a wine and spirits factory, to send workers to pick cotton, October 24, 2018, signed by T. Umarov, First Deputy Chairman of the Board of JSC “Uzsharobsanoat”**

Reference to Protocol No. 98 from the extended meeting of the Joint-Stock Company “Uzsharobsanoat” on September 10, 2018

“Your company was ordered to send 100 workers to create brigades of cotton pickers. To date (October 24), their number has decreased.  
We urgently request that you supplement the brigades with the necessary number of cotton pickers before 7 pm, October 24 and appear in person at the cotton headquarters.”

### The consequences

“The farmer should pick his own cotton himself. Why are employees of state organizations distracted from their own work? Half of our employees are picking cotton. Is it legal to send winery workers to pick cotton? Is this not forced labor?”

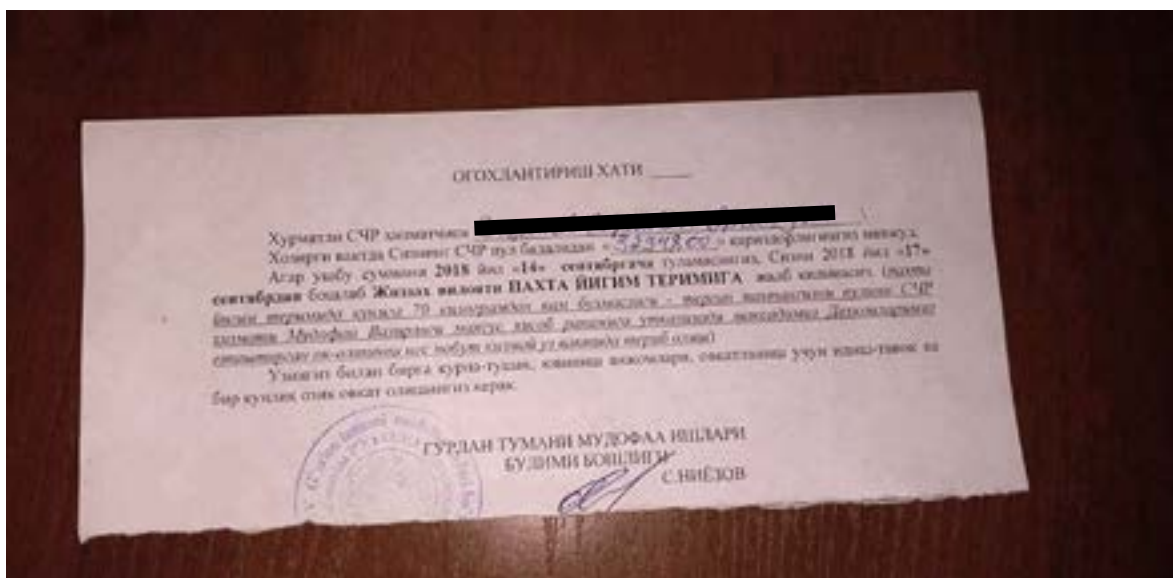
Employee of the winery plant Uzsharobsanoat, October 25, 2018

Source: Sof.uz

<https://sof.uz/news/show/18167-sharobchilarning-yarmi-pahta-termoqda-ma>

UGF documented employees of JSC “Uzsharobsanoat” picking cotton on numerous farms in the Jizzakh region.

Letter of warning, Department of Defense Affairs of the Gurlan District, Khorezm Region



## Soldiers and reservists mobilized to pick cotton throughout the entire harvest season

Letter of warning, signed by S. Niyazov, Head of the Department of Defense Affairs of the Gurlan District, Khorezm Region

Dear reservist of the mobilized call-up reserve (MPR) \_\_\_\_\_ (name withheld)  
At present, you have outstanding payments owed to MPR to the amount of 3,294,800 UZS [approximately \$411.85 US). If you do not pay this amount before September 14, 2018, you will be required to take part in the harvest of cotton in the Jizzakh region from September 17, 2018. During the cotton harvest, you must pick at least 70 kg of cotton per day. The money for the cotton collected will be transferred to a special account of the MPR by the Ministry of Defense. Our goal is to collect the white gold that our farmers have grown without any loss.

„When I was called up for military service, I did not expect to be picking cotton. To be in the army is a duty of every man. When we return home, are we supposed to say that in the army we were picking cotton? It's a source of shame to me.”

Letter from reservist to Radio Ozodlik, 23 November 2018

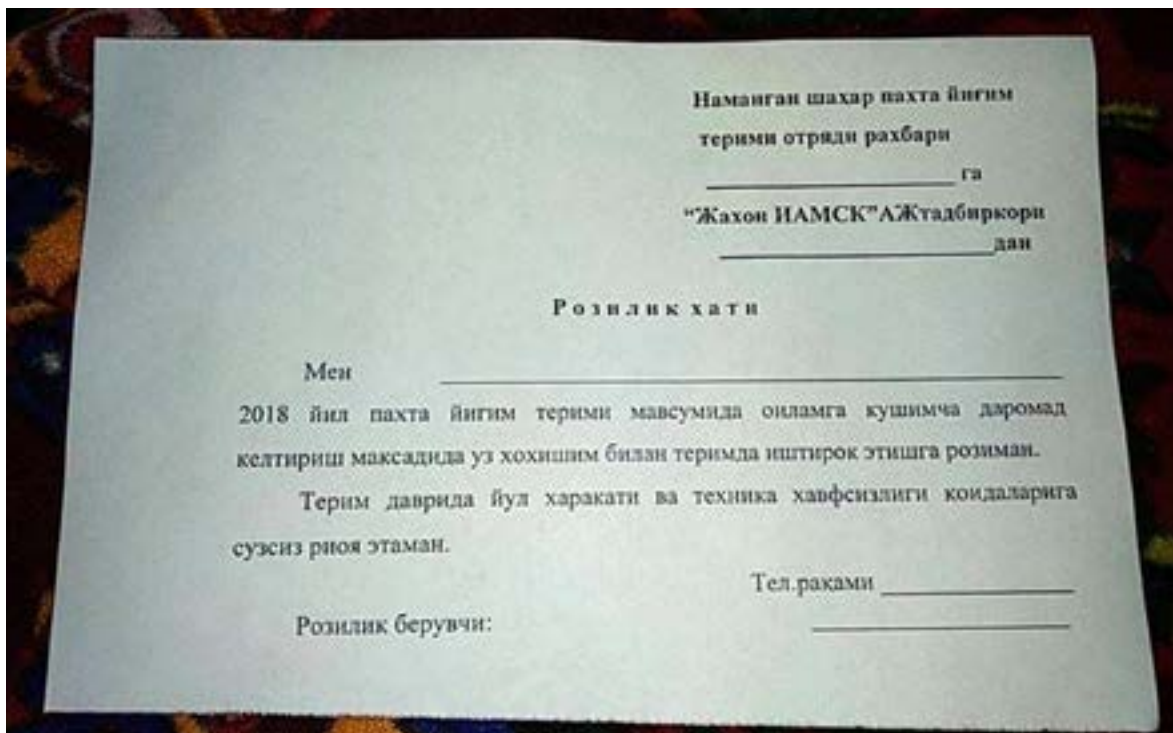
<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxtagram-harbiy/29506961.html>

“My entire army service from beginning to end was picking cotton. I live in a village. At the end of September, a month after I got married and a day after I started a new job, I was suddenly called to the military office. I went with my father. The head of the draft department told me to go immediately to the Shavat military base for service. My father begged the department head to delay my service. The department head refused and warned me that after the New Year, service would be for three months, not one, so my father agreed....

When the 364 soldiers from the base left the cotton fields and prepared to go home, we, the newly arrived group of 364 soldiers, lined up and began picking cotton. Having received orders to pick 80 kilograms a day, we were ordered to start picking and we were all bent over as one on the cotton fields. Military discipline depends on the group commander. The commanders are harsh and can take disciplinary measures against a soldier who lifts his head or talks to someone else. Whoever does not fulfill the quota is punished by peeling potatoes and washing floors at night.”

Uzbek-German Forum interview with military recruit, Gurlan district, Khorezm region, November 5, 2018

**A form distributed among the merchants of the Jahon shopping mall in the city of Namangan**



On August 25, 2018, UGF received a form distributed among the traders of the Jahon market in the city of Namangan. The text of the form was addressed to the leader of a cotton unit and states:

*"I (name) agree to participate in the cotton harvest 2018 in order to earn additional money for my family. At the time of the harvest, I undertake to observe safety rules and rules of the road."*

Signature of the entrepreneur of the market

**A form distributed among the merchants of the Jahon shopping mall in the city of Namangan. The text of the form was addressed to the city cotton headquarters.**

To the head of the city cotton headquarters:

"I (name) agree to participate in the cotton harvest 2018 in order to earn additional money for my family. At the time of the harvest, I undertake to observe safety rules and rules of the road."

Merchant at Jahon shopping mall, Namangan city, September 5, 2018

"We sell at the market in the area of the former silk plant. There are 245 shops here. The market administration demands that all merchants go to pick cotton or pay for replacement workers for 10 days. They threaten to close our shops."

Letter from a merchant in Margilan city, Fergana region, October 22, 2018

Source: Radio Ozodlik

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxtagram-dukon/29557278.html>

An audio file was made available to UGF in which a conversation was recorded between a tax inspector of a district of the Tashkent region and an entrepreneur. The tax inspector is asking the businessman to pay 1.2 million soum (approximately \$150 US – Ed.) to recruit cotton pickers.

„There is a decree by the Prime Minister, the regional hokim, and the district hokim to create brigades of pickers for the timely collection of cotton. In our district there are four sectors. The hokim, the prosecutor, the police, and the tax inspectorate are responsible for each sector. Sectors are entrusted to create brigades of pickers totaling 4,000 people. The tax inspectorate was given the task of finding 1,000 pickers. Each brigade must have 150 pickers. I was appointed commander of a brigade. On the one hand, the authorities say, do not force anyone, on the other hand, they tell you to find 150 pickers wherever you can, otherwise quit your job. Where will I find so many voluntary pickers? As before, I cannot now tell businessmen to close their shops and go and pick cotton. If the store closes, then there will be no trade, there will be no tax revenue. After all, my main job is to collect legitimate taxes for the state budget. Therefore, I beg the businessmen to hand over the money, to do it for the sake of the country, for the sake of the Motherland, so that they are left alone.“

Interview with a tax inspector, published on September 24, 2018

Source: Radio Ozodlik

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxta-2018-bosh-vazir-majburoy-mehnat-terim-otryadi/29507101.html>

## List of Terms

FTUU	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, the official trade union Federation in Uzbekistan.
Hokim	The head of a city, district, or region, usually appointed directly by the president.
Hokimiat	City, district, or regional administration.
Khashar	A traditional Uzbek concept referring to voluntary assistance provided by community members to each other that has been used to describe cotton picking and other government-organized labor mobilization.
Mahalla	A neighborhood-level self-governance unit that is ostensibly independent but can be used for exerting control on residents or fulfilling mandates issued by authorities.
Mahalla council	Organization that oversees a mahalla and also administers certain social benefits such as child and welfare payments and issues some documents to residents.
Ozodlik	The Uzbek language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.
Picking passes	Cotton ripens and is picked in stages, also referred to as passes, each lasting approximately 7-12 days. Cotton is most abundant during the first pass when 50-75% of cotton is ripe, generally from early-mid September, and decreases with each subsequent pass. The second pass generally occurs from early to mid-October, the third pass from mid to late October, and the fourth pass in early November. Cotton picking can continue into late November, even if remaining cotton buds are no longer open; pickers break open buds to pull fiber from them or gather any cotton clinging to stalks that have been cut for firewood.
Replacement picker	Picker hired by individual or enterprise required to pick cotton or send employees to pick involuntarily. The requirement to hire replacement pickers is evidence of forced labor as it is a penalty for refusing involuntary labor
Replacement fees	Fees paid to replacement pickers by the individual or business who hired them in addition to payment for cotton they pick. In 2018, daily rates for replacement pickers ranged from X to X, depending on the region and picking pass.
Soum	Uzbek currency. In autumn 2018, US\$ 1 was approximately equivalent to 8300 soum.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The Cotton Campaign is a global coalition of human rights, labor, responsible investor and business organizations dedicated to eradicating child and forced labor in cotton production. See: <http://www.cottoncampaign.org/who-we-are.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> Plant, Roger. "Modern slavery: the concepts and their practical implications," International Labour Office, Geneva: ILO, 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, section 1: Defining Coercion and Exploitation, p. 1.
- <sup>4</sup> In 2018 the government had moved 15% of cotton production to the private cluster system, under which the government continues to own the land but private companies contract farmers directly for cotton and provide financing, or the companies assume land leases and engage in direct cotton farming. The remaining 85% of cotton production in 2018 remained under the government procurement system. Further expansion of the cluster model is planned for 2019.
- <sup>5</sup> In 2018 about 15% of cotton producing lands had moved to privatized production under the cluster system.
- <sup>6</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with former hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm region, January 15, 2019.
- <sup>7</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm, January 12, 2018.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> "Свыше 200 руководителей наказаны за принудительный труд на хлопке [More than 200 officials punished for forced labor in cotton]," *Gazeta.uz*, November 21, 2018, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/11/21/labour/> (accessed January 7, 2019).
- <sup>10</sup> ILO Third party monitoring report of child labour and forced labour during the 2018 cotton harvest in Uzbekistan published the list of cases where local officials were punished for forced labour during 2018 cotton harvest. It states that „For privacy and ethical reasons, all names of individuals have been initialized and the names of companies, provinces, districts or cities have been replaced by “X” , April 1, 2019, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_681372.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_681372.pdf).
- <sup>11</sup> See for example, "Пахта теримидаги камчиликлар туфайли оммавий равишда ишдан бўшатишлар амалга оширилмоқда [Massive dismissals taking place for shortcomings in cotton harvesting campaign]," *Kun.uz*, October 14, 2018, <https://kun.uz/42210061> (accessed March 18, 2019); "Узбекские чиновники были массово наказаны из-за хлопка [Uzbek officials punished en masse because of cotton]," *UPL24*, October 15, 2018, <https://upl.uz/incidents/8639-news.html> (accessed March 18, 2019); "В Узбекистане уволен еще один хоким [Another hokim is fired in Uzbekistan]," *Kun.uz*, October 19, 2018, <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2018/10/19/hlopok-2018-v-uzbekistane-uvolen-ese-odin-hokim> (accessed March 18, 2019); "Хлопок-2018: еще один хоким остался без работы [Cotton-2018: another hokim is left without a job]," *Kun.uz*, October 19, 2018, <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2018/10/19/hlopok-2018-ese-odin-hokim-ostalsa-bez-raboty> (accessed March 18, 2019); and "Toshkent viloyatining barcha tuman va shahar hokimlari jazoga tortildi [All district and city hokims of Tashkent region punished]," *Kun.uz*, November 2, 2018, <https://kun.uz/uz/news/2018/11/02/toskent-viloyatining-barca-tuman-va-saar-okimlari-zazoga-tortildi> (accessed March 18, 2019).
- <sup>12</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 30, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 2, 2019; former hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm region, January 15, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm region, January 12, 2019; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; mahalla women's committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; and cotton gin accountant, district withheld, Andijan region, October 26, 2018.
- <sup>13</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with seasonal farm employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, September 18, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 22, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 21, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 20, 2018; farmer Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 22, 2018; farm worker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 23, 2018; farm worker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 6, 2018; and farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 12, 2018.
- <sup>14</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with hokimiat employee, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, February 23, 2019; hokimiat employee, Oltynkul district, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; hokimiat employee, Khuzhobod district, Andijan region, January 30, 2019; hokimiat employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, February 2, 2019; former hokimiat employee, Kushkupir district, Khorezm region, January 15, 2019; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 12, 2018; farm worker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 6, 2018; farmer worker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 23, 2018; farmer Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 22, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; mahalla women's committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 21, 2018; head of state agency seconded to hokimiat for cotton harvest, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 19, 2018; and farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 22, 2018.
- <sup>15</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 30, 2019.
- <sup>16</sup> "There is No Work We Haven't Done: Forced Labor of Public Sector Employees in Uzbekistan," Solidarity Center and Uzbek-German Forum, February 2019, <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Uzbekistan.Forced-Labor-in-Public-Sector-Report.English.1.2019.pdf> (accessed March 14, 2019).
- <sup>17</sup> "Death of Uzbek Teacher 'Forced to Clean Streets' Sparks Controversy," *RFE/RL*, March 20, 2018, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/uzbek-teacher-death-sparks-controversy/29110657.html> (accessed March 15, 2019); "Uzbekistan Takes Step to Eradicate Forced Labor," *RFE/RL*, May 11, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-takes-step-to-eradicate-forced-labor/29220945.html> (accessed March 15, 2019); "Мирзияев: отправлять учителей подметать улицы – это предательство не только в отношении меня, но и в отношении моей политики [Mirziyoyev: Sending teachers to sweep the streets is treason not only against me, but against my policies]," *Sadriddin Ashur, Ozodlik*, April 16, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29169728.html> (accessed March 15, 2019); "Мирзияев поручил правительству рассматривать каждый случай принудительного труда как ЧС [Mirziyoyev directed the government to handle every case of forced labor as an emergency]," *Ozodlik*, April 18, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29174133.html> (accessed March 19, 2019); "Каждый случай принудительного труда будет приравнен к ЧС – премьер [Every case of forced labor will be treated as an emergency – Prime Minister]," *Gazeta Uz*, April 18, 2018, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/04/18/forced-labor/> (accessed March 15, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> “There is No Work We Haven’t Done,” p. 10, <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Uzbekistan.Forced-Labor-in-Public-Sector-Report.English.1.2019.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> IFC Project report, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> “ЗА РУЧНОЙ СБОР ХЛОПКА ЗАПЛАТЯТ ОТ 650 ДО 1000 СУМ/КГ [Payment for manually harvested cotton will be from 650-1,000 soum/kg],” Norma.uz, September 6, 2018, [https://www.norma.uz/novoe\\_v\\_zakonodatelstve/za\\_ruchnoy\\_sbor\\_hloпка\\_zaplatyat\\_ot\\_650\\_do\\_1000\\_sum\\_kg](https://www.norma.uz/novoe_v_zakonodatelstve/za_ruchnoy_sbor_hloпка_zaplatyat_ot_650_do_1000_sum_kg).

<sup>23</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with mahalla women’s committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; factory employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 25, 2018; teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; hired picker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, September 17, 2018; teacher, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 1, 2018; state agency employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; seasonal farm employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, September 18, 2018; kindergarten director, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; voluntary picker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, November 16, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 21, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; mahalla women’s committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; hired picker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 17, 2018; farm worker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 6, 2018; teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 2, 2019; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018; employee of public department of mahalla council, Andijan region, December 9, 2018; hired picker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 27, 2018; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 30, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019; teacher, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; doctor, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; Interview with bailiff, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; nurse at tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 25, 2018; employee of Hamkorbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 18, 2018; employee of Promstroibank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, 19 September 2018; employee of Ipotekabank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 19, 2018; employee of Agrobank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Kapitalbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Savdogarbank, Turtkul district, September 21, 2018; and Hamkorbank, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; Yog’gar accountant, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; cotton gin employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; and telephone interview with cotton gin employee, Turtkul district, September 23, 2018; doctor, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018; and three medical workers, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018. See also Systemic Forced Labor Shown through Farm-Level Monitoring, p. 43, below.

<sup>26</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; factory employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 25, 2018; teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; street cleaner, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 9, 2018; teacher, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 1, 2018; state agency employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; kindergarten director, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; head of state agency seconded to hokimiat for cotton harvest, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 19, 2018; military draftee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 5, 2018; water utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 17, 2018; homemaker required to pick cotton, Markhamat district, Andijan region, September 25, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; water department employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 2, 2018; mahalla women’s committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; water utility employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 13, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 25, 2018; mahalla resident, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 3, 2018; market seller, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 3, 2018; teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018; military draftee, Khuzhobod district, Andijan region, December 5, 2018; employee of public department of mahalla committee, Andijan district, Andijan region, December 9, 2018; medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018; department of statistics employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 20, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; employee of JSC Andijan Biokhimyo Zavodi, Andijan city, Andijan region, February 12, 2019; three kindergarten directors, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 13, 2018; school director, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 12, 2018; teacher, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; doctor, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; Interview with bailiff, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; nurse at tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 25, 2018; employee of Hamkorbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 18, 2018; employee of Promstroibank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, 19 September 2018; employee of Ipotekabank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 19, 2018; employee of Agrobank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Kapitalbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Savdogarbank, Turtkul district, September 21, 2018; and Hamkorbank, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; Yog’gar accountant, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; cotton gin employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; and telephone interview with cotton gin employee, Turtkul district, September 23, 2018; doctor, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018; and three medical workers, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; street cleaner, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 9, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; water department employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 2, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018; department of statistics employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 20, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; teacher, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; doctor, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; Interview with bailiff, Ellikkala district, November 14, 2018; nurse at tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 25, 2018; employee of Hamkorbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 18, 2018; employee of Promstroibank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, 19 September 2018; employee of Ipotekabank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 19, 2018; employee of Agrobank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Kapitalbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Savdogarbank, Turtkul district, September 21, 2018; and Hamkorbank, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; Yog'gar employee, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; cotton gin employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; and telephone interview with cotton gin employee, Turtkul district, September 23, 2018; doctor, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018; and three medical workers, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with street cleaner, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 9, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; street cleaner, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 9, 2018; teacher, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 1, 2018; kindergarten director, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018; and medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview state agency employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; teacher, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 1, 2018; farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 22, 2018; kindergarten director, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 3, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; mahalla women's committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018; and hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019. See also, order of Namangan hokimiat imposing a daily quota on 82 public organizations, November 21, 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; mahalla women's committee chairperson, district withheld, Andijan region, October 31, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; and hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; and doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> "АНДИЖОН – "Мақтаб директорлари кунлик нормасини туман хокимлиги олдида хар куни олиб келади [Andijan: School directors bring daily cotton quotas to the district administration every day]," Pakhtagram, Ozodlik, November 12, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/pakhtagram-maktab-hokimiyat/29596399.html> (accessed March 21, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with three medical workers, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 24, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with three kindergarten directors, Kushkupir district, Khorezm region, December 13, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with school director, Kushkupir district, Khorezm region, December 12, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, November 14, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with nurse at tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 25, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Directive of Namangan region hokimiyat, November 21, 2018

<sup>48</sup> Order No. 878 "On the organization of the harvesting of raw cotton in 2018," T. Azamatov, Acting Chairman of the Board of the Joint Stock Company "Uzmetkombinat," Bekabad, Tashkent region, September 19, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. The order references Protocol No. 01-03/1-3276, September 10, 2018, of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Decision No. 689, September 4, 2018, of the hokim of the Tashkent region; and Letters No. 1/2-2488, August 10, 2018 and No. 1/2-2913, September 17, 2018, of the hokim of Bekabad city.

- <sup>50</sup> Undated letter from the head of the Department of Culture of the Jizzakh region on sending employees of cultural institutions to pick cotton. “Ўзбекистон, Пахта-2018: „Аёл ва эркаклар парда билан бўлинган бир хонада ётибди [Uzbekistan Cotton-2018: Women and Men Are Sleeping in Room Divided],” BBC Uzbek Service, September 28, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/uzbek/uzbekistan-45672871> (accessed March 27, 2019). Letter from S.N. Irisbekov, Deputy Head of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Elena Urlaeva, November 16, 2018.
- <sup>51</sup> Uzkimyosanoat Fax message No. 599A, September 25, 2018; “Spanish-Owned Chemical Company Implicated in Forced Labour with Tragic Consequences,” Uzbek-German Forum, December 18, 2018, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/spanish-owned-chemical-company-implicated-in-forced-labour-with-tragic-consequences/> (accessed March 27, 2019).
- <sup>52</sup> “Spanish-Owned Chemical Company Implicated in Forced Labour with Tragic Consequences,” Uzbek-German Forum, December 18, 2018, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/spanish-owned-chemical-company-implicated-in-forced-labour-with-tragic-consequences/> (accessed March 27, 2019).
- <sup>53</sup> Joint letter of the Uzbek-German Forum and DIGNItex, a Spanish coalition that advocates for decent work, to Maxamcorp S.A.U. President Jose Fernando Sanchez-Junco, January 15, 2019. See also: Ammofos-Maxam, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, updated February 19, 2019, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/ammofos-maxam> (accessed March 28, 2019).
- <sup>54</sup> Uzbek-German Forum telephone interview with Sohijjon Mutalibov’s father, March 11, 2019. In 2016 Ozodlik reported that employees at Ammofos-Maxam had not received their salaries four months. “Крупнейший Химзавод в Узбекистане задолжал сотрудникам около миллиона долларов» [A major chemical company in Uzbekistan owes its employees approximately a million dollars],” Ozodlik, February 23, 2016, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/27568744.html> (accessed March 21, 2019).
- <sup>55</sup> Message to the heads of 13 affiliate enterprises of the joint stock company Uzsharobsanoat ordering them to send employees to pick cotton, signed by T. Umarov, first deputy chairman of the board, October 24, 2018. For information on Uzsharobsanoat’s structure, see: <https://vinsanoat.uz/ru/structure/Структура%20органов%20управления/Организационная%20структура/>.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> UGF documented brigades of employees of three different Uzsharobsanoat companies not included in the message to affiliates picking on farms in the Jizzakh region. An employee of another Uzsharobsanoat company said that the company sent half its employees, 300 people, to pick cotton in Andijan and in Jizzakh. Uzbek-German Forum interview with employee of JSC Andijan Biokhimyo Zavodi, Andijan city, Andijan region, February 12, 2019.
- <sup>58</sup> Uzdonmakhsulot, <http://www.uzdon.uz/ru/#ru/content/about/faoliyati/> (accessed March 28, 2019).
- <sup>59</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with employee of BukharaDon, Dustlik district, Jizzakh region, October 14, 2018.
- <sup>60</sup> “Асака дон махсулотлари“ ишчилари ойлик тўланмаганига норозилик сифатида иш ташлади [Employees at Asaka Grain Products stopped working to protest lack of salary payments], Sadridin Ashur, Ozodlik, January 24, 2019, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/asakadon-ishchilari-ish-tashladi/29728765.html> (accessed March 21, 2019).
- <sup>61</sup> There are no laws in Uzbekistan that explicitly prohibit the establishment of unions independent of the FTUU. However, the only recent effort to do so resulted in a legal decision to dissolve the newly-formed organization and imprison two of the three co-founders, one of whom died in prison. “There is no work we haven’t done,” p. 19. See also: Cotton Campaign report, Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan: A Workers’ Organization or an Instrument to Control Workers?, November 2017, [www.cottoncampaign.org/uploads/3/9/4/7/39474145/ftuu\\_full\\_reformatted\\_report.pdf](http://www.cottoncampaign.org/uploads/3/9/4/7/39474145/ftuu_full_reformatted_report.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2019); Kirill Buketov, “The democratic future of Uzbekistan doesn’t depend on the politicians, but whether workers can mobilise,” Open Democracy, October 9, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/the-democratic-future-of-uzbekistan/> (accessed March 21, 2019). The ITUC has recommended that the law on public organizations be amended so that registration becomes a formality to ensure freedom of association in practice. Secretariat report of the ITUC mission to Uzbekistan 28/02-02/03/2017, [https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/17gc\\_e\\_05\\_-\\_affiliation\\_annex\\_v.ii\\_annex\\_a\\_secretariat\\_report\\_uzbekistan.pdf](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/17gc_e_05_-_affiliation_annex_v.ii_annex_a_secretariat_report_uzbekistan.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2019).
- <sup>62</sup> Secretariat report of the ITUC mission to Uzbekistan 28/02-02/03/2017, [https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/17gc\\_e\\_05\\_-\\_affiliation\\_annex\\_v.ii\\_annex\\_a\\_secretariat\\_report\\_uzbekistan.pdf](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/17gc_e_05_-_affiliation_annex_v.ii_annex_a_secretariat_report_uzbekistan.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2019).
- <sup>63</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; and employee of JSC Andijan Biokhimyo Zavodi, Andijan city, Andijan region, February 12, 2019. See also: “There is no work we haven’t done,” p. 20.
- <sup>64</sup> Uzmetskombinat order No. 878, September 19, 2018, signed “in agreement,” by chairman of the trade union committee, A. Uzakov.
- <sup>65</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with employee of JSC Andijan Biokhimyo Zavodi, Andijan city, Andijan region, February 12, 2019.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>67</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with employee of Hamkorbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 18, 2018; employee of Promstroibank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, 19 September 2018; employee of Ipotekabank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 19, 2018; employee of Agrobank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Kapitalbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 20, 2018; employee of Savdogarbank, Turtkul district, September 21, 2018; and Hamkorbank, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with Yog’gar employee, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018.
- <sup>71</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with cotton gin employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018.
- <sup>72</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with two cotton gin employees, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018.
- <sup>73</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews two cotton gin employees, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; and telephone interview with cotton gin employee, Turtkul district, September 23, 2018.
- <sup>74</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with cotton gin employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Beruni district, Karakalpakstan, September 21, 2018; two cotton gin employees, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, September 23, 2018; and telephone interview with cotton gin employee, Turtkul district, September 23, 2018.

- <sup>75</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm, January 12, 2018.
- <sup>76</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with head of state agency seconded to hokimiat for cotton harvest, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 19, 2018; mahalla council chairperson, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 20, 2018; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, January 30, 2019; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; and hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019.
- <sup>77</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with former hokimiat employee, district withheld, Khorezm region, January 15, 2019.
- <sup>78</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 2, 2019.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>80</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; water utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 17, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; public health employee, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 16, 2018; doctor, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; teacher, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, December 1, 2018; medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018; hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019; and hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019.
- <sup>81</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; factory employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 25, 2018; college director, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, October 26, 2018; teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018; factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018; medical worker, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 10, 2018; employee of JSC Biokhimiya Zavodi, Andijan city, Andijan region, February 12, 2019; and hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 13, 2019.
- <sup>82</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 25, 2018.
- <sup>83</sup> “ҚАШҚАДАРЁ – “Миллий банк ходимларига берилган “картошка пули”нинг ярми пахтага олиб қолинди” [Kashkadarya – Half the ‘potato money’ allocated to National Bank employees spent in the cotton fields], Pakhtagram, Ozodlik, October 16, 2018, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxtagram-bank-qashqadaryo/29546410.html> (accessed March 23, 2019).
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with Zulfiya Mavlonova, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, November 22, 2018. See also a video interview of Mavlonova, “Тўртқўл Интернатидаги ноҳақликларга чора кўрилмаяпти [Impossible Injustice at Turtkul Specialized School],” Eltuz, December 4, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8mSbGO658Q> (accessed March 19, 2018); “Постельное белье детей, больных туберкулезом, передали солдатам, приехавшим на сбор хлопка (видео) [Bedding Taken from Children Sick with Tuberculosis Given to Soldiers Come to Pick Cotton],” Sadridin Ashur, Ozodlik, October 26, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29564901.html> (accessed March 27, 2019).
- <sup>86</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interviews with bank employee, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 15, 2018; doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018; nurse, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 18, 2018; military recruit, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 5, 2018; water utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 17, 2018; homemaker required to pick cotton, Markhamat district, Andijan region, September 25, 2018; pension fund employee, Zhalalkuduk district, Andijan region, October 11, 2018 and phone interview October 15, 2018; water department employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 2, 2018; water utility employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 13, 2018; and factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018. See also “Тошкентдаги чет эл элчихоналарини кўриқловчилар ҳам мажбуран пахтага юборилди [Security Staff of Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Tashkent Forced to Pick Cotton],” Ozodlik, October 10, 2018, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/paxta-elchixona-qori-qchilar-majburiy-mehnat-iv/29536251.html> (accessed March 27, 2019).
- <sup>87</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with water utility employee, Andijan, Andijan region, October 13, 2018.
- <sup>88</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Andijan city, Andijan region, December 2, 2018.
- <sup>89</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with seasonal cotton picker, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, December 26, 2018; employee of public department of mahalla committee, Andijan district, Andijan region, December 9, 2018; street cleaner, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, October 9, 2018; water utility employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 17, 2018; and homemaker required to pick cotton, Markhamat district, Andijan region, September 25, 2018.
- <sup>90</sup> Letter from eight cotton pickers of Markhamat district, Andijan region to President Mirziyoyev, December 18, 2018. A copy of the letter is on file with the Uzbek-German Forum.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup> “Пахтага одам чиқарган отряд раҳбарлари иш ҳақини ололмапти [Brigade leaders who recruited cotton pickers can’t get paid],” Sadridin Ashur, Ozodlik, January 5, 2019, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/otryad-rahbarlari-ish-haqini-ololmayapti/29692979.html> (accessed March 26, 2019).
- <sup>93</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with hokimiat employee, district withheld, Andijan region, February 23, 2019.
- <sup>94</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with doctor, Balikchi district, Andijan region, November 8, 2018.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018; and seasonal farm employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, September 18, 2018; and farmer, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, November 21, 2018.
- <sup>97</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018.
- <sup>98</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, December 8, 2018.
- <sup>99</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with teacher, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018.
- <sup>100</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with nurse, Shakhrikhon district, Andijan region, November 20, 2018.
- <sup>101</sup> Uzbek-German Forum interview with cotton gin accountant, district withheld, Andijan region, October 26, 2018.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> BCI is a cotton sustainability program that manages a farm-level implementation of the Better Cotton Standard, a voluntary standard and certification system based on environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable practices. See: <https://bettercotton.org>.

<sup>107</sup> For full results of the project in 2018, including UGF's monitoring results, see: "The Development, Testing, and Implementation of a Sustainable Cotton Standard System," Project Report for the Consultative Council Meeting, Sustainable Cotton Supply Chain Development in Uzbekistan, International Finance Corporation, February 28, 2019, <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/6fcb79f3-c156-4e8f-888b-cfbd079a0476/Project-Report-Sustainable-Cotton-Supply-Uzbekistan.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> (accessed March 13, 2019).

<sup>108</sup> The IFC paid UGF for its time and implementation costs for this work; UGF is a non-profit organization and does not provide for-profit services.

<sup>109</sup> In interviews with mahalla council officials and people mobilized to pick cotton by mahalla officials, UGF monitors conducting general monitoring documented instances where mahalla officials forced people to pick cotton by threatening to withhold benefits or impose other consequences. Some of these cases occurred in the Fergana region. Additionally, Ozodlik published reports that teachers in several regions, including Fergana and Jizzakh, were ordered to pick cotton as part of groups of "unemployed" people or people participating in so-called "khashar." This report refers specifically to the Dustlik district, Jizzakh region. "Жиззахда ўқитувчилар пахта теримига чиқарилди. Фарғона, Наманган, Самарқандда ҳам [Teachers in Jizzakh are Picking Cotton. Fergana, Namangan, Samarkand]," Sadridin Ashur, Ozodlik, October 26, 2018, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/uqituvchi-paxta-terishga-majburlanyap-ti/29565676.html>.

<sup>110</sup> See Project report, p. 23. The data used for this analysis included UGF's monitoring results in addition to other sources. The Project did not disclose in which district the PU it analyzed is located.

<sup>111</sup> In addition, monitors interviewed owners and employees of numerous small businesses in Dustlik and Pakhtakor who said they were required to provide a specific number of employees or pay for replacement workers at a cost of 20,000-25,000 soum per day per employee.

<sup>112</sup> Jizzakh has the second lowest population by region in Uzbekistan and is the fourth least-densely populated. See: <https://stat.uz/en/435-analiticheskie-materialy-en1/2075-demographic-situation-in-the-republic-of-uzbekistan>. Monitors interviewed pickers living in train cars in both districts who complained about poor living conditions, including lack of electricity, potable water, and adequate hygiene facilities.

<sup>113</sup> UGF monitors observed large groups of pickers, including public sector employees, mobilized to Jizzakh from other regions. Monitors from Fergana confirmed that brigades of pickers were sent from Fergana to pick cotton in Jizzakh. As early as September 25, 2018, monitors confirmed that brigades of cotton pickers comprised of employees of a Uzdonmakhsulot facility were sent from the Fergana region to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region. In interviews, employees said that they were fulfilling orders of their director and, although they all had to sign statements of their "voluntary participation," they had no choice and were not allowed to leave the fields to return home. They said that they did not work very hard picking cotton since they were receiving their regular salaries, but did have to buy cotton from local residents, indicating they were required to meet picking quotas.

<sup>114</sup> Fergana has the second highest population of any region in Uzbekistan and is the second most densely populated. See: <https://stat.uz/en/435-analiticheskie-materialy-en1/2075-demographic-situation-in-the-republic-of-uzbekistan>.

<sup>115</sup> For more information about the meeting, see <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/f0ce0a83-8596-4dff-bf36-5b17d3137266/Communique-sustainable-cotton-supply-uzbekistan.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>. UGF has observer status on the Consultative Council.

<sup>116</sup> These recommendations are described in full detail in a Roadmap to End Forced Labor developed by the Cotton Campaign that will be presented to the government of Uzbekistan in May 2019, as well as made publicly available on the Cotton Campaign's website.



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Forced Labor in Uzbekistan's Cotton Harvest 2018