



“TASHKENT’S REFORMS HAVE NOT YET REACHED US”

**UNFINISHED WORK IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FORCED
LABOR IN UZBEKISTAN’S 2019 COTTON HARVEST**



UZBEK FORUM
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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Executive Summary

On September 27, 2019, the Minister of Emergencies issued a decree formally ordering 2,100 firefighters to pick cotton in various regions across Uzbekistan. However, days before that, fire departments around the country had already begun making preparations and sending firefighters to pick cotton in the fields. Dozens of messages from firefighters appeared on social media, decrying the order to pick cotton and asking for help.

“We are employees of the firefighting service. Every year we are forced to pick cotton for two months in Jizzakh region. The picking quota is 100 kilos per day. This week, we were again ordered to make preparations to go. What should we do?”

- Message from firefighter on Pakhtagram, Navoi city, September 13, 2019

“We, the firefighters of the firefighting service of Bukhara region are being forced to pick cotton. We usually work in three shifts. Now, one shift has left to pick cotton and so we work in two shifts (12 working hours). This is a burden for us. Honestly, we are afraid to sign our names, but please help us.”

- Message from firefighter on Pakhtagram, Bukhara

“By order of the head of the firefighting service, [name withheld], 100 employees have been sent to Jizzakh to pick cotton. But we were told that they will no longer force public organizations to pick cotton? Two hundred employees were forced to work in the *Obod Kishlok* program [for housing reconstruction and maintenance]. Why can’t anyone punish [our boss, name withheld]? He says that he received an order from the Minister of Emergencies, Khudaiberganov.

- Message from firefighter on Uzbek Forum’s Pakhta-2019 Facebook group, Andijan, September 28, 2019

“We work in the Samarkand regional fire service. We are picking cotton in Pakhtakor district in Jizzakh region. What they are feeding us a dog wouldn’t even eat but they are charging us 22,000 soums (approximately US \$2.20) a day for it. If we complain, then the head of the cotton headquarters [name withheld] and a captain named [name withheld], who are in charge of everything said to us—what, do you want to lose your jobs?”

- Message from Samarkand firefighter on Uzbek Forum’s Pakhta-2019 Facebook group, Jizzakh, November 4, 2019

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These messages from firefighters provide stark evidence that the eradication of forced labor in the cotton sector in Uzbekistan remained elusive in the 2019 harvest, despite major progress. They also show clearly the challenges that remain in eradicating forced labor definitively: structural labor shortages in some regions and at some harvest stages and a lack of effective and ethical mechanisms for voluntary recruitment that do not involve government actors or government pressure. The story of the firefighters also underscores the painful reality that accountability also remained elusive, allowing forced labor to hide in plain sight. Documentary evidence clearly shows that a central government agency ordered its employees to pick cotton. But despite public messages from firefighters reporting forced labor, stating their fears that they could lose their jobs for complaining, and pleas to hold officials accountable, nothing appears to have been done. There is no evidence that an investigation was undertaken, that any officials were held to account, or that any remedies were provided to victims. Uzbekistan has shown the political will to end forced labor and undertaken an ambitious reform agenda but has yet to establish fully a culture of prevention, accountability for perpetrators, and protection for victims.

In just a few years, Uzbekistan has made significant, rapid progress toward the elimination of adult forced labor in the cotton harvest, following the elimination of child labor in 2014. Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has made dismantling forced labor in the cotton sector the centerpiece of his effort to modernize and reform Uzbekistan, making

strong public commitments, enacting several key reforms, and increasing accountability measures. Over the last year, further significant developments have taken place in regard to forced labor in the cotton sector and the government's reform process. But the 2019 harvest also showed that the work is not yet complete.

During the 2019 harvest, the government fell short in addressing some of the key structural drivers of forced labor, in particular the quota system and national production targets under the supervision and responsibility of regional and district officials. Evidence from the 2019 harvest shows that these quotas and targets continued to drive forced labor. Today, as a reform process is underway and the government has shown unprecedented political commitment, officials acknowledge that forced labor was still in evidence during 2019, in part linked to government policies such as state-imposed cotton production quotas. This realistic assessment propelled the ending of state quotas for the 2020 harvest in March, even though they had already been set for the year.

In addition to the quota system, other entrenched problems continued drive forced labor. Although cotton picking is an important source of income for some, especially rural women, and the majority of cotton pickers work voluntarily, Uzbekistan faces embedded structural labor shortages for manual cotton picking in some lower population areas and on less productive land, as well as in the later stages of the harvest when pickers earn less. Uzbekistan has also made little progress in establishing fair recruitment systems that are independent from the government or employers. These issues, combined with a weak and under-resourced accountability system and the continued involvement of *hokims* (heads of regional or district administrations, akin to governors and mayors) in agriculture, leave vulnerable employees at risk of forced labor. Finally, the pace of reform on civil society freedoms—especially the freedom of citizens to form civic associations such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and independent trade unions—has lagged far behind the pace of reforms in other key areas. NGOs, unions, and civic activists have a key role to play in the reform process in promoting transparency and accountability. There is a pressing need for capacity building of civil society to empower them to conduct independent monitoring that will be critical to ensure labor practices are in line with international standards.

As Uzbekistan looks to expand its textile production capacity to create much-needed jobs and seeks access to new markets in Europe and the U.S., it must urgently address these critical policy gaps to continue to root out remaining forced labor and foster a culture of prevention and accountability for this abuse. Responsible investors and brands have ethical and legal commitments not to include any product in their supply chains that is tainted with forced labor. They also need to have confidence that supply chains are transparent and have robust, independent monitoring to ensure that they do not fall afoul of their commitments.

Uzbek Forum has conducted independent, community-based monitoring and reporting on the cotton harvest since 2009. In previous reports, Uzbek Forum endeavored to expose forced labor, identify its root causes, and show the scale, impact on institutions, and effects on people forced to work. Here, we seek to contribute to the reform process by highlighting not just positive trends but also by using our depth of knowledge to identify problems and spark a discussion about solutions. As well as documenting the continued use of forced labor, this report seeks to identify the gaps in the reform process which continue to facilitate and incentivize it and provide the basis for a solutions-based approach to finally eliminating the practice.

Key Findings from the 2019 Harvest

- While most pickers work voluntarily, Uzbek Forum monitors documented the forced mobilization of employees from public sector organizations and extortion of employees to pay for replacement pickers. Employees from all over the country reported that they were afraid to refuse to go to the fields themselves or pay for someone to pick cotton in their place when directed to do so by government officials or employers, though relatively less forced mobilization occurred in major cities and some district centers.
- The Uzbek government remained closely involved in cotton production, including in privatized cotton clusters, and used coercion to meet quotas and production targets. Regional and local officials again had the responsibility to oversee the fulfillment of government-imposed production targets, which have been identified as a key driver of forced labor. Officials required people to pick cotton involuntarily or face consequences including loss of job, social benefits or reprisals at work. Uzbek Forum monitors also documented cases in several regions where local officials forcibly mobilized pickers to work on privatized cluster farms.
- In 2019 the bulk of the forced labor burden shifted from people in lower paying/lower status jobs in health and education to people working in mid-level level civil servant positions, such as employees of banks, local administrations and government agencies, as well as firefighters, police, military cadets, and emergency workers. These employees had to pick cotton or pay for a replacement picker or face consequences at their jobs. Entrepreneurs and traders also had to pick cotton or pay money to contribute to the cost of the harvest or risk consequences with the tax inspectorate that could affect their businesses. In one district of the Andijan region alone, Uzbek Forum monitors documented pickers or replacement pickers who were sent to the fields from organizations including the local government agencies, tax inspectorate, utilities companies, the Farmers Council, the agriculture inspectorate, banks, and insurance companies.
- Employees of schools and hospitals in most regions did not participate in the harvest at all which is a significant improvement on previous years. However, employees of schools and kindergartens in Khorezm, Jizzakh, Fergana, Tashkent and Karakalpakstan regions testified that their involvement in the cotton harvest on weekends began in late October. School directors were instructed by the district *hokimiat* to declare *khashar* (Uzbek tradition of voluntary unpaid community work) and to mobilize at least half of the school staff, including teachers and technical staff. Workers from the healthcare and education sectors responding to a national online poll conducted with the support of the Solidarity Center (see Methodology, page 8) were more likely to report both penalties for refusing to participate in the harvest and poor working conditions.
- Employees of medical institutions in the monitored areas, including nurses and paramedics, were also mobilized on weekends, receiving instructions from their immediate supervisors and the district *hokimiat* in Jizzakh, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan. An Uzbek Forum monitor who observed medical staff in the Jizzakh region being sent to the fields reported that the deputy head doctor and a representative of the *hokimiat* checked the names of pickers on a list as they boarded buses and warned them: “Nobody forced you to pick cotton; you came for *khashar*.”
- Of all regions monitored, the most widespread involvement of medical workers in the cotton harvest took place in Karakalpakstan. For example, on October 28, an Uzbek Forum monitor interviewed a maternity ward nurse at the Turtkul District Central Hospital who said that staff had to leave every two days to pick cotton or give money to hire pickers and that out of 80 maternity hospital employees, 25 nurses or pickers hired by them left every day to pick cotton.

- Uzbek Forum monitors obtained documents that show that in 2019 forced labor continued to be government organized or the result of government policy, such as mobilization orders from government agencies.
- Cotton produced by privatized cotton clusters was included in government-imposed cotton production quotas. Local officials bore responsibility for ensuring these quotas were fulfilled, creating incentives for *hokims* to interfere with the operation of clusters. In the 2019 harvest, this has resulted in officials forcibly mobilizing pickers to pick cotton on private cluster farms, presenting conflicting choices for enterprises who are committed to preventing the use of forced labor in their value chains.
- Uzbek Forum’s findings from the 2019 harvest show that privatized clusters enter into contracts with farmers to produce contract amounts in a way that closely mimics the quota system. The management of cluster contracts is often under the supervision of the prosecutor or other officials. Farmers lack autonomy and protection, have no bargaining power, and have no real choice over their contractual cluster partners. They face penalties for failure to meet the contract amounts, including threats from *hokims* that they will lose their land. While there is significant variation among clusters, some clusters essentially act as joint ventures with local administrations whereby clusters receive financing and the *hokimiat* pressures farmers to deliver contract amounts and in some cases mobilize pickers.
- Although the government has strengthened penalties for officials who use forced labor and has moved to criminalize repeat violations, the Labor Inspectorate has often failed to conduct proper investigations that result in accountability for officials who direct forced labor. The feedback mechanisms run by the Ministry of Labor and the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan for citizens to report forced labor remain weak and lack widespread trust among the population. People who call hotlines are asked to give their full name, address, passport, and employment details to register a complaint. Inspections usually do not go up the chain of command but have targeted low-level officials and supervisors who are themselves pressured to provide cotton pickers.
- Penalties are ineffective. An Uzbek Forum monitor in Karakalpakstan reported a head doctor who required hospital employees to pick cotton. A labor inspector subsequently confirmed that the doctor had already been fined but continued to send employees to the fields nonetheless, presumably because he was under pressure to do so.
- The role of the *mahalla* (neighborhood council), in the recruitment of cotton pickers, both voluntary and involuntary, has remained intact. *Mahalla* leaders have considerable power in their communities because of their responsibility and discretion in the disbursement of social benefits so that residents feel unable to refuse the “request” to pick cotton. One *mahalla* leader told an Uzbek Forum monitor: “If we didn’t have people relying on us for benefits, we wouldn’t be able to find pickers.” *Mahalla* leaders are under pressure to provide pickers on behalf of the *Mahalla*. This is unpopular with pickers who prefer to work as replacement pickers for employees of public organizations as they can receive the replacement fee in addition to the price per kilo.
- Civil society plays a vital role in ensuring transparency and accountability, identifying, documenting, and bringing violations to light. While the government has made commitments to allow independent monitoring of the cotton harvest, it has not created an enabling environment for the free operation of independent human rights activists or civil society organizations and continues to interfere with the work of independent monitors, including through arbitrary detention and spurious criminal charges.



Soldiers undergoing one month's paid military training for enrollment in the "mobilization recruiting reserve" were sent to pick cotton for one month. Khorezm region, Shavat district, October 3, 2019. © Ozodlik

Methodology

Uzbek Forum for Human Rights (formerly Uzbek-German Forum/UGF) conducted monitoring of forced labor in the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan over a four-month period from September to December 2019 with the participation of eleven trained labor rights monitors and conducted additional interviews in January and February 2020. Monitoring was carried out in six of Uzbekistan's thirteen regions: Khorezm, Jizzakh, Fergana, Andijan, Kashkadarya, and the Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic. Two additional interviews were conducted in Syrdarya. Two independent human rights activists conducted six fact-finding visits to the Tashkent region and shared information with Uzbek Forum. Monitors all have training in human rights documentation and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and have several years' experience monitoring forced labor in cotton and other sectors. Monitors are paid for their work and compensated for work-related expenses such as travel, but do not pay for information. People who give interviews to monitors are not paid or compensated in any way.

Uzbek Forum has monitored child and forced labor and labor conditions in the cotton harvest annually since 2009 and has gained deep insight into the social, economic and political structures that are responsible for the mobilization of Uzbek citizens to pick cotton. Uzbek Forum's monitors have extensive contacts among employees of public organizations and enterprises that are involved in the cotton harvest every year. Often, employees of organizations and enterprises that forcibly order them to the fields turn to Uzbek Forum monitors whom they know and trust to share information about forced labor. Thus, in addition to interviews, Uzbek Forum monitors followed up on reports of forced labor received from these individuals. Upon receiving information, monitors typically traveled to picker departure sites or to cotton fields to verify facts, gather corroborating information, speak to pickers, and observe the process.

Monitors also visited various government agencies and departments, as well as banks, hospitals, schools, universities, and markets to gather information and conduct brief interviews. During the cotton harvest, monitors conducted short interviews with over 200 employees of state and commercial organizations, voluntary cotton harvesters, mahalla

activists, and government officials. These interviews were conducted in an atmosphere of trust and monitors assessed the interviewees as having a high degree of credibility.

In addition, monitors conducted 111 in-depth interviews with people who picked cotton or were forced to pay money for the harvest or to hire pickers. They also interviewed six people who recruited cotton pickers: a district *hokimiat* official, a police officer, two *mahalla* recruiters, and two people recruiting pickers for banks. Additional interviews were conducted with six cotton farmers. Interviews were conducted in private, away from supervisors or employers, and on the basis of confidentiality and anonymity.

Documentary evidence of government involvement in forced labor: Uzbek Forum monitors also gathered documentary evidence of forced labor in the harvest and links to official policy. Monitors obtained copies of five different government orders directing agencies or organizations to send their employees to pick cotton. These include an order from the central Ministry of Emergencies directing firefighters to pick cotton; a decree issued by a district official ordering employees of many organizations in the district to send employees to pick cotton or pay for pickers; and other orders directing soldiers, and policemen to participate in the harvest.

Pakhtagram: Uzbek Forum collaborated with Radio Ozodlik, the Uzbek-language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which has a sizeable audience in the most remote areas of Uzbekistan. Since 2015, Ozodlik has hosted a Telegram channel, *Pakhtagram* (Cottongram), from the beginning of the cotton season each year where users can post messages about their experiences in the cotton harvest. A selection of the messages is published on Ozodlik's website. From September to November 2019, the *Pakhtagram* channel received more than 100 messages from all regions of the country in which readers complained about being forced to pick cotton or having to pay for a replacement picker. Ozodlik provided Uzbek Forum access to the channel, which allowed Uzbek Forum to contact readers for further clarification. Some of the complaints published on Ozodlik's website prompted labor inspectorate investigations that in some cases resulted in fines or other measures against employers and district officials. In some cases, forced mobilization or coercion of employees stopped as a result of the measures taken. Uzbek Forum is also aware of several instances where the use of forced labor resumed despite the measures.

Harvest Survey: Uzbek Forum partnered with the Solidarity Center and RIWI Corp., a public polling/research firm, to conduct a nationwide online survey to assess participation and conditions in the harvest (hereinafter referred to as the "harvest survey"). In contrast to interviews, the survey was not intended or used to identify individual instances of forced labor, but rather to assess trends with a survey tool that could collect participant response numbers and geographic breadth outside the scope of Uzbek Forum's monitoring capacity while still guaranteeing absolute anonymity of respondents.

The harvest survey consisted of about eight closed ended/multiple response questions, though the exact number of questions survey participants answered depended on the combination of responses given. It was open for responses for approximately two months from the second week in December 2019 through the first week in February 2020. This timeframe, well after all harvest activities had been completed, was selected to ensure that later stages of the harvest were reflected in responses. The harvest survey therefore gives insights about conditions during the harvest as a whole but does not distinguish between phases of the harvest. Respondents were self-selecting and no data collectors aided the respondents in clarifying or providing responses.

A total of 35,806 respondents started the survey and answered at least the initial questions on their sex and age. Child labor was not a focus of the survey and all respondents self-reported to be adults over the age of 18. In all, 24,323 respondents answered the question about whether they had participated in the 2019 harvest. Of these, 10,430 replied that they had participated and thus moved on to questions about the details of their participation. Unless otherwise indicated, this is the target population used for further analysis. ¹

Table 1: Participation in the Cotton Harvest
Question: Did you participate in the cotton harvest?

		Count	Percent
Valid	Yes	10,430	29.1
	No	13,893	38.8
	Total	24,323	67.9
Missing		11,483	32.1
Total		35,806	100.0

A full description of the methodology, as well as a demographic break down of respondents, can be found as Appendix 1. Online surveys naturally collect data disproportionately from those who have access to the internet. In this case the sample skewed by more young and male respondents than the population at large or cotton pickers, the majority of whom are female, and most participants came from the capital city of Tashkent. Analyses of the harvest survey in this report uses unweighted data. However, analyses of the data with and without weights demonstrated that while the strength of some relationships changed, there was no difference in the overall conclusions. Using unweighted data leads to more conservative estimates of the coercion pickers experienced and of the negative consequences a refusal to participate in the harvest would have. A detailed analysis of the impact of oversampling of males on final conclusions is included as Appendix 2.

RIWI Corp. collected data as a contracted third-party and the Solidarity Center monitored progress without any interference in the data collection and without taking any influence on its results. A statistician employed by the Solidarity Center with expertise in labor rights and forced labor reviewed the survey results and conducted the analysis. This analysis was then cross-checked by a team of experts from the Solidarity Center with specialized knowledge of labor rights, forced labor, and the cotton sector in Uzbekistan, who drew conclusions independently of Uzbek Forum’s qualitative findings. Uzbek Forum and Solidarity Center teams then compared analysis and conclusions.

Uzbek Forum’s qualitative findings, supported by government documents and anecdotal media reports, are in line with the results of the harvest survey. Taken together, the experts triangulated the data sources to provide a broader, richer, and validated understanding of the harvest conditions than could be derived by any individual means of assessment. The consistency of findings obtained through these different instruments confirms a degree of reliability to the conclusions of the experts on the execution and effects of the 2019 cotton harvest.

**29 октябрь ҳолатига тезкор
МАЪЛУМОТ**

	Шартномавий режа, тонна	Бир кунда		Мавсум бошидан	
		тонна	%	тонна	%
Фарғона вилояти	238 600	146	0,06	264 816	110,99
Андижон вилояти	240 800	272	0,11	254 764	105,80
Қорақалпоғистон Республикаси	184 200	815	0,45	188 097	102,12
Хоразм вилояти	246 400	1 499	0,61	246 490	100,04
Наманган вилояти	192 500	846	0,44	183 818	95,49
Тошкент вилояти	219 600	3 498	1,59	202 497	92,21
Сирдарё вилояти	193 600	1 965	1,02	178 162	92,03
Бухоро вилояти	318 300	2 722	0,86	292 868	92,01
Сурхондарё вилояти	234 500	1 357	0,58	210 297	89,68
Самарқанд вилояти	205 000	3 876	1,89	146 128	71,28
Жиззах вилояти	208 600	3 664	1,76	140 801	67,50
Навоий вилояти	94 600	2 145	2,27	63 570	67,20
Қашқадарё вилояти	381 300	2 760	0,73	237 877	62,39
Ўзбекистон Республикаси	2 958 000	25 565	0,86	2 610 185	88,24

Region-wide information on the 2019 cotton harvest including the Republic of Karakalpakstan. © Uzbek Forum

Region-wide information on the 2019 cotton harvest including the Republic of Karakalpakstan

October 29, 2019

Urgent information as of October 29, 2019

№	Region	contractual plan, tons	in one day		as of the beginning of the season	
			tons	percent	tons	percent
1	Fergana	238 600	146	0,06	264 816	110,99
2	Andijan	240 800	272	0,11	254 764	105,80
3	Karakalpakstan	184 200	815	0,45	188 097	102,12
4	Khorezm	246 400	1 499	0,61	246 490	100,04
5	Namangan	192 500	846	0,44	183 818	95,49
6	Tashkent	219 600	3 498	1,59	202 497	92,21
7	Sirdarya	193 600	1 965	1,02	178 162	92,03
8	Bukhara	318 300	2 722	0,86	292 868	92,01
9	Surkhandarya	234 500	1 357	0,58	210 297	89,68
10	Samarkand	205 000	3 876	1,89	146 128	71,28
11	Jizzakh	208 600	3 664	1,76	140 801	67,50
12	Navoi	94 600	2 145	2,27	63 570	67,20
13	Kashkadarya	381 300	2 760	0,73	237 877	62,39
	Republic of Uzbekistan	2 958 000	25 565	0,86	2 610 185	88,24

In 2019, the state set a quota to harvest 2,958,000 tons of cotton. Data on the amount of cotton harvested daily is collected by district and regional „cotton headquarters“ and reported to the government in Tashkent.

2019 Findings

Positive Trends

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has led his government in a vital transformation in tone and substance to end forced labor in the cotton sector, publicly condemning forced labor, prioritizing the issue for government action and announcing an ambitious reform agenda. As of now, a slate of key reforms has been enacted with others underway or planned. Key positive steps implemented over the last several years include:

- High-level, public, clearly articulated commitment to end forced labor;
- An increase in the price paid to pickers to make voluntary cotton picking more attractive;
- An end to systemic child labor and an end to the use of university students in cotton picking;
- A significant reduction in the numbers of health and education employees forcibly mobilized to pick cotton;
- An increase in penalties for forced labor and criminalization in place from 2020;
- Public outreach and awareness;
- Increased number of trained labor inspectors;
- The elimination, in March 2020, of government-set quotas for cotton production for the 2020 harvest.

Uzbekistan has made a clear and credible political commitment to end forced labor and, for the first time, has a clearly articulated strategy to do so. This resulted in some visible improvements in 2019 as compared to previous years.

Uzbek Forum monitors observed zero tolerance policies for child labor consistently in all regions monitored. Children were generally kept away from the fields to avoid even the appearance of child labor. Farmers and local police issued warnings to pickers not to bring their children to the cotton fields. Where individual cases of child labor did arise, authorities reacted quickly to resolve them. The public's understanding of the prohibition on child labor in cotton picking has cemented over the past several years, leading to a broad cultural shift away from this practice in cotton picking.

A political commitment to exempt staff from hospitals, clinics, schools, and kindergartens from having to pick cotton was in evidence in nearly all regions, with the notable exception of Karakalpakstan. With some exceptions, Uzbek Forum monitors found that where employees from medical and educational institutions were mobilized to pick cotton, they worked only on the weekends and only for a few days during the season. It was clear that *hokims* knew of the prohibition to mobilize employees of these institutions and only resorted to sending them to the fields when faced with labor shortages or under pressure to meet quotas.

Generally, authorities made an effort to hide forced mobilization more so than in previous years, a sign that the government's messages against forced labor have begun to take root and that there is broad awareness that forced labor should not be used. Local administrations still turned to public institutions and enterprises to provide workers to pick cotton. However, in contrast to previous years, rather than openly threatening and demanding that they send percentages of their workforces, they instructed heads of institutions to try to convince their employees to pick cotton. Nearly all interviewees Uzbek Forum spoke to said that there was less stress, pressure, and aggressive tactics such as explicit threats and verbal abuse than in previous years. They said that instead, their employers or local officials increased the use of propaganda, appeals to feelings of national duty, and persistent requests to get workers to go to the fields.

In another sign that commitments to end forced labor were beginning to take root, some *hokims* offered material incentives and prizes to attract more voluntary pickers and entice them to work. For instance, some offered bottles of cooking oil for certain quantities of cotton picked or provided gifts such as electric kettles or other appliances to the best pickers.

As a result of greater efforts to attract and keep voluntary pickers, many pickers mobilized through their employers were sent to the fields later than in previous years, usually only from mid-October, and worked for shorter periods than previously.

Additionally, public awareness campaigns about the ban on forced labor appeared to have a positive effect in helping some people stand up against pressure to pick cotton or pay money for the harvest. Uzbek Forum monitors documented several cases where people were able to refuse to pick cotton or provide money without immediate consequences. For example, a market stall owner said that tax inspectors extorted money from market workers to pay for cotton pickers. She said that in the past, there was no way to stand up against this extortion but this year, when the tax inspectors made their rounds to collect money, some market workers began to resist by recording the conversation on their telephones and asking the tax inspectors “are you forcing us to pay for cotton pickers?” She said, “We don’t earn very much, certainly not enough to pay for cotton pickers.”²

Forced Labor Linked to Government Policies and Control

Despite these positive trends, the 2019 harvest also showcased the deep challenges that remain in the effort to end forced labor in cotton production conclusively. Some structural drivers of forced labor, in particular the involvement of *hokims* in agriculture and the quota system, remained entrenched. These, combined with a lack of progress in developing alternative recruitment systems and weak accountability systems, resulted in significant use of forced labor throughout the regions Uzbek Forum monitored. Thus, the 2019 harvest reveals an inconsistent picture: the government’s commitment to ending forced labor is real and progress is meaningful, but government actions and policies also continued to drive forced labor in both government and privatized cotton-textile cluster production areas.³



Hokimiyat official rewarding a cotton picker with a bottle of cooking oil. For every 50 kg of cotton, pickers usually receive one liter of oil. Andijan region, September 29, 2019. © Uzbek Forum

Uzbek Forum’s monitoring documented a clear pattern of forced labor linked to government policies, especially the quota system and the close oversight of *hokims* in agriculture in their districts, including cotton production even on farms in the privatized cluster system. In the 2019 harvest, *hokims*—appointed by and accountable to the central government—continued to bear direct personal responsibility for fulfilling cotton production quotas imposed by the central government, creating incentives for *hokims* to address structural labor shortfalls (see Structural Labor Shortages, page 23) by instructing institutions to send pickers to the fields.

Oversight of cotton production and allocation of labor remained in the hands of officials who wield coercive power over farmers and cotton pickers, including local administrations 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 continued to bear day-to-day responsibility for oversight of cotton production and implementation of quotas, despite the ostensible privatization of production under the cluster system.⁴



The continued existence of quotas and the responsibility of *hokims* to ensure the success of clusters in their jurisdictions also resulted in mobilization of forced labor to privatized cotton clusters.

The continued existence of quotas and the responsibility of *hokims* to ensure the success of clusters in their jurisdictions also resulted in mobilization of forced labor to privatized cotton clusters. Uzbek Forum monitors found that *hokims* mobilized forced labor brigades of public employees to farms producing cotton under contracts with private cotton clusters. Despite the illegality, some clusters may welcome or solicit such assistance if they face labor shortages, high labor costs, or do not have recruitment mechanisms in place. This again highlights the urgent need for recruitment systems, strong prevention and enforcement mechanisms, and the imperative to disentangle *hokims* from cotton production. In one case, a district *hokim* sent forced labor brigades from local utilities and factories even though the cluster operator had informed the *hokim* that he did not want to use forced labor and intervened to send the brigades away.⁵

Data from the harvest survey clearly demonstrate a strong correlation between method of recruitment – particularly by a *hokim* or an employer – and various forms of labor exploitation. Respondents recruited by their employers or by *hokims* were more likely to experience situations that are strong indicators of penalty for both unfree recruitment and work and life under duress according to an assessment framework developed by the International Labor Organization (ILO)⁶ They were also more likely to be pressured to obfuscate their participation and to have their earnings deducted.

Tables 2, 3, and 4, which follow on pages 18 - 23, help analyze those results. It is worth noting that those reporting menace of penalty or poor working conditions were in the minority across the board. However, respondents recruited by certain actors were more or less likely than the average respondent to report certain forms of coercion or abuse. This is demonstrated by the color coding. Those shaded in green were much more likely than average to respond to the question as indicated, and those shaded in red were much less likely to respond that way. A clear pattern emerges that suggests those who were recruited by *hokims* or their own employers, and to some extent by *mahalla* councils and directly by farmers, were more likely to fear a negative consequence for refusing to participate in the harvest and more likely to report poor working conditions while participating in the harvest. Interviews and other fact-finding conducted by Uzbek Forum monitors recruitment by farmers did not suggest pickers feared consequence for refusal to pick cotton. Farmers generally do not exert material or social control over pickers and are not in a position to impose consequences on pickers for refusing to pick cotton. Although farmers do recruit cotton pickers, the pickers are recruited either directly through local communities or through *mahalla* councils or brigade leaders who then recruit their own picking groups. The fact that recruitment by farmers is linked to a fear of a negative consequence for refusal in the harvest survey could be explained by the role of the *mahallas* in recruitment. *Mahalla* leaders exert material and social influence over the *mahalla*’s residents and can and do impose consequences on people for refusing to pick

cotton. People told to pick by *mahalla* leaders tasked with finding pickers for particular farms may misunderstand or misreport the relationship between the *mahalla* and the farmer with the perception that the farmer has played a role in recruitment (see further details in the text box, Recruitment Channels, page 17). As noted in Table 6, pickers recruited by a farmer or farm employee were much more likely to be able to refuse to pick cotton than people recruited by their employers or *hokims*.

Main recruitment channels for cotton pickers:

- 1. The *hokimiat* assigns *mahalla* leaders to recruit a certain number of cotton pickers depending on the number of residents of the *mahalla*.** In interviews with Uzbek Forum monitors and media, *mahalla* leaders often complain of the difficulties in finding sufficient numbers of pickers, especially toward the end of the harvest. *Mahalla* councils fall under the direct jurisdiction of the *hokimiat*, (city, district, or regional administration whose leaders, *hokims*, are appointed by the central government).⁷ During the cotton season, *mahalla* leaders have to report to the *hokimiat* on how many cotton pickers they have recruited and on the amount of cotton picked by brigades organized by the *mahalla*.
- 2. Brigade leaders, employment centers under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor as well as private employment agencies also recruit cotton pickers.** Individuals acting as brigade leaders recruit and oversee picking groups on behalf of farmers or organizations that need to send pickers. In 2019, leaders of picking brigades were paid two million soums (approximately US \$200) for the cotton season from the government's Public Work Fund.⁸ In case of insufficient voluntary pickers public employment centers and private employment agencies are contracted by district *hokims*, organizations, or cotton clusters to find pickers from among the unemployed population. These agencies received a premium from the Public Work Fund.
- 3. Heads of public organizations, whose employees receive salaries from the state budget, are tasked by the *hokimiat* to send a certain number of pickers**—either employees or replacement pickers paid for by employees—to the fields. The number of pickers each organization has to send usually depends on the size of the organization. Although the government has formally moved away from this recruitment practice, it was still in widespread use in 2019.
- 4. Farmers or their farm managers recruit their own pickers independently.** They find pickers from among the local population that live near the farms, some of whom depend on cotton picking as a key source of income. They also make arrangements with *mahalla* leaders to send picking groups or find pickers at unregulated day laborer markets. They also agree with brigade leaders who form their own picking groups from more populous areas and negotiate payment and conditions with the farmer.

In some cases, pickers may be promised certain conditions by brigade or *mahalla* leaders and find different conditions when they arrive to work. They also may not always distinguish clearly whether they were recruited directly by a farmer, who does not have control or influence over them, or by a local *mahalla* leader, who controls benefits payments and other material and social aspects.

Table 2: Perception of penalty for refusing to pick cotton according to who recruited respondents
Question: What would happen if you refused to pick cotton? (Select all that apply) [read down]
> By: Who recruited you to pick cotton? [read across]

			Farmer	Farm employee	Hokim/ Hokimiat	Mahalla council	Employment agency	Own boss/ supervisor	No one/ myself	Other	Total
I would be fired or get in trouble with my employer/supervisor	Yes	Count	56	26	85	60	20	216	39	76	578
		% of total	15%	16%	32%	15%	17%	34%	4%	9%	
Neighbors would make me feel ashamed	Yes	Count	54	32	26	63	17	44	65	54	355
		% of total	15%	19%	10%	15%	14%	7%	7%	6%	
The mahalla would cause me problems (deprive me of benefits, stop my utilities, etc.)	Yes	Count	68	21	36	59	14	42	30	48	318
		% of total	19%	13%	13%	14%	12%	7%	3%	6%	
I would have to pay a fine (to employer or local authority)	Yes	Count	59	15	58	57	17	56	38	45	345
		% of total	16%	9%	22%	14%	14%	9%	4%	5%	
Other consequences	Yes	Count	51	14	58	48	12	75	82	178	518
		% of total	14%	8%	22%	12%	10%	12%	9%	21%	
No consequences	Yes	Count	178	96	88	218	68	314	740	559	2,261
		% of total	49%	58%	33%	53%	56%	49%	79%	64%	
n = 3,785	TOTAL		466	204	351	505	148	747	994	960	4,375
Color Key:	Result of refusal much less likely with this form of recruitment	Result of refusal less likely with this form of recruitment	No relationship between this form of recruitment and this result of refusal	Result of refusal more likely with this form of recruitment	Result of refusal much more likely with this form of recruitment						
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)						

Table 3: Working conditions for pickers according to how they were recruited to pick cotton
Question: What were the conditions of work like in the cotton harvest? (Select all that apply) [read down]
> By: Who recruited you to pick cotton? [read across]

			Farmer	Farm employee	Hokim/ hokimiat	Mahalla council	Employment agency	Own boss/ supervisor	No one/ myself	Other	TOTAL
Quality of food was poor/quantity was insufficient	Yes	Count	18	12	32	20	9	65	38	41	235
		% of total	9%	13%	20%	8%	13%	17%	6%	8%	
Insufficient access to clean water	Yes	Count	21	10	33	27	13	68	32	49	253
		% of total	10%	11%	21%	11%	18%	18%	5%	9%	
No access to hygiene facilities	Yes	Count	16	6	31	23	10	55	25	37	203
		% of total	8%	6%	19%	10%	14%	15%	4%	7%	
Living conditions were substandard	Yes	Count	15	8	31	15	11	53	26	44	203
		% of total	7%	8%	19%	6%	15%	14%	4%	8%	
We were made to work long hours	Yes	Count	17	11	25	12	12	41	14	20	152
		% of total	8%	12%	16%	5%	17%	11%	2%	4%	
People shouted at or were insulting to workers	Yes	Count	16	8	18	9	9	29	10	19	118
		% of total	8%	8%	11%	4%	13%	8%	2%	4%	
People beat or hit workers	Yes	Count	16	10	13	12	11	24	10	16	112
		% of total	8%	11%	8%	5%	15%	6%	2%	3%	
Didn't get paid properly (e.g. on time, correct amount)	Yes	Count	20	7	17	16	10	36	17	27	150
		% of total	10%	7%	11%	7%	14%	10%	3%	5%	
Conditions were fine (no complaints)	Yes	Count	121	57	68	167	34	199	527	401	1,574
		% of total	59%	60%	42%	69%	48%	53%	82%	75%	
n = 2,325	TOTAL		260	129	268	301	119	570	699	654	3,000
Color Key:	Working conditions much less likely with this form of recruitment	Working conditions less likely with this form of recruitment	No relationship between this form of recruitment and these working conditions	Working conditions more likely with this form of recruitment	Working conditions much more likely with this form of recruitment (standardized residual > +3.0)						
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)						

Table 4: Perception of coercion by recruitment methods											
Question: Which of these statements apply to you regarding the recent cotton harvest? (Select all that apply) [read down]											
> By: Who recruited you to pick cotton? [read across]											
			Farmer	Farm employee	Hokim/hokimiat	Mahalla council	Employment agency	Own boss/supervisor	No one/myself	Other	TOTAL
I was told to tell inspectors something untrue (e.g. about my profession, voluntary participation or work conditions)	Yes	Count	13	3	15	7	6	22	10	12	88
		% of total	9%	5%	14%	4%	14%	8%	2%	3%	
I was forced to sign a form saying my participation in the harvest was voluntary	Yes	Count	10	5	30	3	5	36	12	17	118
		% of total	7%	8%	27%	2%	12%	14%	3%	4%	
Costs for participating in the harvest (e.g. food or transportation costs) were deducted from my earnings	Yes	Count	6	3	14	12	4	18	12	11	80
		% of total	4%	5%	13%	6%	7%	8%	3%	3%	
			(129)	(59)	(91)	(174)	(47)	(235)	(473)	(391)	(1,599)*
n = 1,676		TOTAL	158	70	150	196	62	311	507	431	1,885
* In this question on coercion and abuse respondents could choose multiple answer options. This table only displays three of them, which all together represent 286 responses. The 1,599 responses summarize the answer options not displayed in this table.											
Color Key:	Much less likely with this form of recruitment	Less likely with this form of recruitment	No relationship of this statement with this form of recruitment	More likely with this form of recruitment	Much more likely with this form of recruitment						
Statistically significant relationship: P(,0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)						

Lack of Fair and Effective Recruitment Systems and Structural Labor Shortages

Two critical problems were in evidence in 2019 that continued to drive forced labor. Uzbekistan's cotton harvest is a massive undertaking: in 2019 it produced 2.84 million tons of cotton, harvested in just two and a half months, from mid-September to the end of November, an effort that required some 1.75 million pickers.⁹ Despite increases in piece rates paid to pickers and differentiated rates introduced in recent years, by mid-October there are not enough voluntary pickers available to bring in the remaining harvest. As Uzbekistan has lessened the reliance on public institutions and local officials to mobilize pickers, it has not yet instituted a fair and effective recruitment system to match available labor with needs on the scale required. In addition, Uzbekistan's cotton harvest suffers from structural shortages in labor. These shortages are embedded in the current system due to variation in population among regions and to the agricultural practices in use. The labor shortages are compounded by the lack of effective recruitment systems: farmers with labor shortages, however predictable, do not have a recruitment system on which they can rely to supply them with voluntary labor. Some farmers, especially those who do not want to grow cotton and do not profit from it, rely on the local government to provide pickers.

Structural Labor Shortages

Some farmers are able to recruit sufficient voluntary pickers from among the local population who live in villages or neighborhoods near their farms and who rely on the farm for seasonal work, cotton stalks for fuel, and other needs. Farmers in low population districts, whose land is far from population centers, may experience labor shortages but have long relied on local *hokims* to provide them with brigades of pickers, in many cases sent from higher population areas. Farms with low yields and farms that continue picking late in the season also experience labor shortages because they are undesirable to pickers.

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. 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 in 2019 however, after accounting for inflation, were not much higher than the previous year. Rates did increase 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. These measures, while generally positive, do not go far enough to address the problem of ensuring sufficient numbers of pickers as the season progresses. In the 2019 harvest this came into sharp focus when officials in all regions monitored by Uzbek Forum increasingly turned to businesses and public sector employees, including those from the health and education sectors in some regions, to pick cotton or pay for pickers starting by mid-October.

Lack of Fair and Effective Recruitment Systems

The cotton production system in Uzbekistan was built on forced mobilization of cotton pickers dating back to the Soviet era. While the government has made significant progress in abandoning forced labor in recent years, it has done little to address the objective problem of structural labor shortfalls, especially from mid-season, or to establish effective recruitment mechanisms. Some clusters, particularly those that are engaged in producing cotton themselves on land that they lease directly (direct farming clusters), may turn to mechanization as a solution to labor shortages and costs. This is also because direct farming occurs on larger tracts of land that are more amenable to mechanized harvesting. For farmers that contract to grow cotton for cotton clusters (contract farming clusters) mechanization may be cost prohibitive or not appropriate for smaller tracts of land. Thus, contract farming clusters especially should invest in the infrastructure required to attract and recruit voluntary pickers. This includes organizing transportation; providing decent living and working conditions for pickers, including food, hygiene facilities, and sleeping quarters; and offering

sufficient incentives to make picking attractive later in the season. This should not be carried out by *mahalla* councils or local administrations but by cluster operators working closely with farmers and local communities, or professional recruitment agencies that adhere to international standards. Farmers alone do not have sufficient human or financial resources to conduct this work individually and resort to hoping that the *hokimiat* will step in to send pickers.

If Uzbekistan wants to conclusively end forced labor, it must categorically break with the practice of mobilizing cotton pickers by *hokims* and other officials directing heads of organizations, employers, and businesses to send their employees to pick cotton. Employers and officials should not be involved in recruitment channels, even if some employees who are ordered to pick cotton are willing to do so to earn extra money. This shift does not mean that people who wish to supplement their incomes by picking cotton should not be allowed to do so. Workers who choose to pick cotton should be allowed to do so by presenting themselves voluntarily through a recruitment channel separate from their employer, and by picking cotton during their non-working hours or by taking a leave of absence.

To date, there has been little progress on establishing a recruitment model or system that does not rely on government structures or employers to recruit cotton pickers. Uzbekistan relied for decades on public institutions, including schools and hospitals, to provide pickers for the harvest. Officials from these institutions remained officially in charge of providing labor through the 2017 harvest and continued to organize labor and provide pickers in 2018.¹⁰ In 2019, *mahalla* councils were the main official channel tasked with recruiting pickers from among the unemployed living in their neighborhoods. *Mahallas* have always been involved with the recruitment of pickers and the organization of brigades, together with various government agencies and heads of institutions. As the government has officially moved away from involving public sector organizations and has not yet established private recruitment channels, it increased the pressure on *mahallas* to recruit pickers. The councils themselves had to meet ambitious quotas for the numbers of pickers they had to provide and resorted to coercion in some cases to recruit sufficient pickers, particularly in the later stages of the harvest. *Mahallas* play an important role in the daily life of their neighborhoods, wielding control over the allocation of child and welfare benefit payments, issuing essential documents, and granting permission for milestone events, such as weddings and funerals. A *mahalla* recruiter said that she recruits by explaining to potential pickers that the work is voluntary but also makes it clear that refusal is not an option. She said, “It’s a good thing that we control their benefits payments, or we would never be able to find enough pickers to fulfill our recruitment quota.”¹¹



A *mahalla* recruiter said that she recruits by explaining to potential pickers that the work is voluntary but also makes it clear that refusal is not an option. She said, “It’s a good thing that we control their benefits payments, or we would never be able to find enough pickers to fulfill our recruitment quota.”

Uzbek Forum monitors interviewed two police officers who also participated in recruiting pickers. One police officer, who together with his colleagues had to pay for replacement pickers, also had to help the *mahalla* find pickers. He said that police officers could not refuse to pay for replacement pickers because, “Who would pick the cotton? There aren’t enough people. Fewer people are now picking for the *mahalla*. There aren’t enough people to pick. We explain to the residents that they can earn good money.”¹²

The very use of law enforcement officers to recruit pickers is problematic as people may feel unable to refuse because police wield coercive power. One police officer used this power of coercion directly to find pickers for the *hokimiat*. He explained that he rounded up drunks on the street and threatened them with 15 days’ administrative arrest or they could be sent to Syrdarya or Jizzakh to pick cotton for a month.¹³



Police have traditionally been involved in picking cotton in Uzbekistan. During the 2019 cotton season, the police picked cotton while others had to hire cotton pickers and visit cotton fields to keep order. October 8, 2019, Namangan region. © Uzbek Forum

Another *mahalla* recruiter said that it is very difficult to find sufficient pickers because most people who are willing to pick cotton are hired as replacement pickers, earning a replacement fee on top of what they earn from picking. He said that if the *mahalla* cannot find enough pickers they will face complaints from the authorities: “Every dog in the *hokimiat* will come to us to show its teeth.”¹⁴ It is evident through documents and interviews that *mahalla* representatives were unable to recruit sufficient numbers of voluntary pickers without resorting to coercion. A document received by the *mahalla* leader from Buka district in the Tashkent region shows that already by October 3, after the first pass, mahallas, tasked with recruiting 10,047 pickers fell short by 2,471 pickers, nearly 25% of the required number.¹⁵

The government has not yet developed fair and effective recruitment systems to take the place of *mahallas* or hokimiats that could ensure sufficient labor for cotton picking without coercion, particularly for the highest risk areas and stages of the harvest. High risk areas include lower population districts with insufficient local voluntary labor; remote farms far from villages that could supply pickers; and low productivity farms where picking is unattractive.

Forced Labor Mobilization

The ILO, which has conducted Third-Party Monitoring of forced and child labor in the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan since 2015, estimates on the basis of a nationwide telephone survey that 5.9 percent of cotton pickers, or 102,000 people, were in conditions of forced labor in the cotton harvest in 2019. While the structure and assumptions of the harvest survey commissioned by Solidarity Center do not allow for an accurate nationwide assessment of forced labor, the survey results do suggest that the ILO's estimate may be conservative when looking at results based on three factors: 1) ability to refuse to pick cotton; 2) menace of penalty; and 3) replacement fees.

1. Ability to Refuse to Pick Cotton

Just under half of respondents indicated that they did not feel they could refuse participation in the cotton harvest.

		Count	Percent
Valid	Yes	3,047	51.7
	No	2,841	48.3
	Total	5,888	100.0

There could be many reasons why people think that they cannot refuse participation in the harvest. This alone is not an indication of forced labor since the question does not specify the consequences of a refusal to pick cotton or the rationale behind the decision. Some respondents who feel obliged to participate in the harvest might see it as their civic duty, others might feel pressured because of the negative consequences a refusal would have, others might feel they have to participate in the harvest because they need the income. A more complete discussion of potential negative consequences follows. Here, it is worth noting that whatever reasons people had to think they could not refuse to participate in the harvest, neither age, gender, occupation nor location were relevant variables. The position of the person responsible for recruitment, however, played a key role according to harvest survey data. Those recruited by farmers and farm employees and those recruited via a regular employment agency were much more likely to say they could refuse. Those recruited by their own employer were much less likely to say that they could refuse.

Table 6: Respondents' ability to refuse to pick cotton according to how they were recruited
Question: Could you refuse to pick cotton?
> By: Who recruited you to pick cotton?

		Farmer	Farm employee	Hokim/hokimiat	Mahalla council	Employment agency	Own boss/supervisor	No one/myself	Other	TOTAL
Yes	Count	433	191	206	346	153	386	665	667	3,047
	% of total	67%	65%	53%	53%	68%	41%	49%	48%	52%
No	Count	217	102	184	305	71	546	698	718	2,841
	% of total	33%	35%	47%	47%	32%	59%	51%	52%	48%
n = 5,888		650	293	390	651	224	932	1,363	1,385	5,888
Color Key:	Much less likely with this form of recruitment	Less likely with this form of recruitment		No relationship with this form of recruitment		More likely with this form of recruitment		Much more likely with this form of recruitment		
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)		As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)		Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)		Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)		

The section above on structural labor shortages explained why relying on farmers and farm employees to recruit pickers may not be viable or sufficient in every region. The comparison of pickers recruited by employment agencies and those recruited by their bosses or supervisors clearly demonstrates the importance of developing effective recruitment channels for seasonal labor in the Uzbek cotton harvest instead of relying on institutions to mobilize their own workforces since people recruited this way were much more likely to fear losing their regular jobs if they refuse to pick cotton.

2. Menace of Penalty

Of the 3,785 participants in the harvest who answered the question on the consequences they would have experienced for refusal to pick cotton would have had, 1,524 respondents, or 40 percent, reported at least one negative consequence, all of which would constitute a strong or medium indicator of menace of penalty under ILO forced labor survey guidelines.¹⁶ (Respondents could select multiple responses).

Table 7: Penalties for refusal
Question: What would happen if you refused to pick cotton? (Select all that apply)

	Count	Percent of total
I would be fired or get in trouble with my employer/ supervisor	578	15%
Neighbors would shun me	355	9%
The Mahalla would cause me problems (deprive me benefits, stop my utilities, etc.)	318	8%
I would have to pay a fine (to employer or regional authority)	345	9%
Other consequence	518	14%
Nothing, no consequences	2,261	60%
TOTAL	4,375	
n = 3,785		

As detailed earlier in the report, experiencing a menace of penalty had the strongest relationship with the method of recruitment. Workers in certain sectors were also more likely to experience some penalties. For instance, only 15 percent of all respondents who picked cotton and answered the question, feared dismissal or other workplace penalties as a consequence for refusal to participate in the harvest. Comparatively, 22 percent of those in the education and medical fields and 35 percent of those who worked for local government felt threatened by the same consequences. Furthermore, respondents working in education or for local government were somewhat less likely than other professions to think there would be no consequences for their refusal.

Table 8: Perceived penalties for refusal to pick cotton by profession
Question: What would happen if you refused to pick cotton? (Select all that apply)* [read down]
> By: What is your profession? [read across]

			Education	Medical	Mahalla council	Local gov.	Private sector	Farm worker	Public sector	Other	Unemployed	Total
I would be fired or get in trouble with my employer/supervisor	Yes	Count	33	19	6	8	4	11	26	41	27	175
		% of total	22%	22%	15%	35%	3%	19%	18%	12%	6%	
I would have to pay a fine (to employer or local authority)	Yes	Count	15	13	6	2	9	7	0	18	19	89
		% of total	10%	15%	15%	9%	7%	12%	0%	5%	4%	
No consequences	Yes	Count	94	54	30	11	109	40	102	239	363	1,042
		% of total	63%	62%	73%	48%	80%	69%	71%	68%	81%	
			(43)	(24)	(10)	(5)	(28)	(17)	(22)	(93)	(77)	(319)*
n = 1,438		TOTAL	185	110	52	26	150	75	150	391	486	

* In the question on the consequences of a refusal to pick cotton, respondents could choose multiple answer options. This table only displays three of them, including no consequences, which all together represent 1,306 responses. Answer options not listed in this table were not significantly correlated to profession. The 319 responses summarize these answer options

Color Key:	Result of refusal much less likely for this profession	Result of refusal less likely for this profession	No relationship between this profession and this result of refusal	Result of refusal more likely for this profession	Result of refusal much more likely for this profession
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)		Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

3. Replacement Fees/Extortion

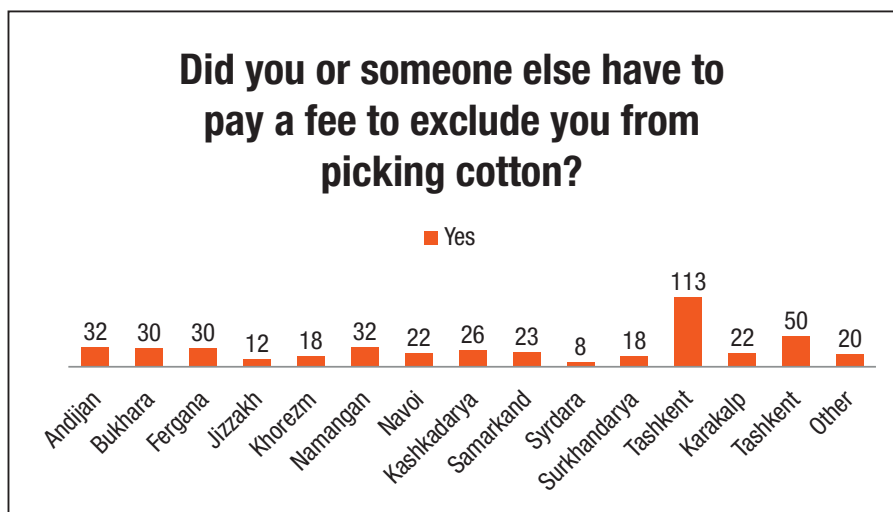
Those who said they did not participate in the harvest were asked if they had been made to pay for a replacement picker, or if someone paid on their behalf, to exclude them from the harvest. Of the 11,355 respondents to that question, 11 percent (1,255 people) said they had had to pay a replacement fee.

Table 9: Fees to Avoid Cotton Picking
Question: Did you or someone else have to pay a fee to exclude you from picking cotton?

		Count	Percent
Valid	Yes	1,255	11%
	No	10,100	89%
	Total	11,355	100%

Those indicating they had paid for a replacement picker spanned ages and occupations but were geographically centered in Tashkent.

Chart 1: Payment of Fees by Region



When assessing the extent of forced labor in Uzbekistan, it is important to include those who paid replacement fees to avoid the harvest. In 2019, the cost of hiring a replacement worker cost from between 20,000 soums (approximately US \$2) to 1.5 million soums (approximately US \$150), depending on the job and region of the person paying and the stage of the harvest and length of time the replacement picker had to work. They were confronted with the same choice as those who ended up in the fields, but they chose instead to accept the penalty.

Officials forcibly mobilized labor from the beginning of the harvest to meet labor shortages

The drop in the use of employees from medical and educational institutions in 2019 to pick cotton appeared to prompt officials to turn instead to employees from other sectors or to extort money to hire replacement pickers. Banks, public utilities, emergency services, various branches of law enforcement, government agencies, such as local land use and maintenance departments, as well as the military, all sent employees or replacement workers paid for by employees to the fields at the beginning of the season. *Hokims* turned to health and education employees, small businesses and market traders, and other sectors under the control or influence of local officials in mid-season, once the number of voluntary pickers declined.

Law enforcement, military, and emergencies personnel

While some of the public agencies that sent cotton pickers to work in the 2019 harvest are under local or regional control, the military, law enforcement, and emergencies personnel in particular, operate in centralized command structures. Significant numbers of personnel from these agencies could only have been mobilized to the cotton harvest with the knowledge and coordination of their ministries. In fact, a September 27, 2019 decree from the central Ministry of Emergencies orders 2,100 firefighters to participate in the cotton harvest.¹⁷ A letter from the Ministry of Defense, in response to an inquiry from a human rights activist, acknowledged that military cadets also picked cotton.¹⁸ Uzbek Forum monitors interviewed three police officers who, together with their colleagues, had to pick cotton or pay for replacement pickers; two soldiers who had to pick cotton instead of undergoing military training; a firefighter who picked cotton together with a quarter of his brigade, and a firefighting cadet sent to pick cotton for two months with students from the academy.¹⁹ A fourth police officer said that the local *hokimiat* instructed him and other police

Янгийўл шаҳридан Чиноз туманида 2019 йил ҳосили учун пахта хом-ашёсини йиғиб олиш бўйича КОРХОНА ВА ТАШКИЛОТЛАРНИНГ ҚУВЛИК ТЕРИЛГАН ПАХТА ХОМ-АШЁСИ БЎЙИЧА МАЪЛУМОТ										
04.10.2019										
№	Отряд раҳбари	Телефон рақами	Корхона ва ташкилотлар	Теримчи сони			терилган пахта (кг)			
				режа	амалда	фарқи (+:-)	режа	Бир кунда	Мавсум бошилар	ўртача кг
				2300	1 864	-646	119 000	93 800	803 558	50,3
	✓		4-сектор шаҳар ДСН бошлиғи ҳудуди бўйича	600	310	-290	30 000	14 800	142 300	47,7
19	Турапов Ориф	99-830-28-28	ДСН Талбиркорлари	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
20	Бегматов Хайрулла	98-110-00-19	ДСН Талбиркорлари	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
21	Гуломов Зиёвуддин	97-798-88-87	ДСН Талбиркорлари	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
22	Муслимов Шахбоз	97-716-70-09	ДСН Талбиркорлари	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
23	Садуллаев Бегзод	93-592-19-93	ДСН Талбиркорлари	100	62	-38	5 000	3 000	28 580	48,4

"Information on the daily amount of cotton to be harvested by enterprises and organizations sent from Yangiyul city to Chinaz district for the cotton harvest 2019", October 4, 2019. © Elena Urlaeva.

Information

On the harvesting of raw cotton materials for the harvest of 2019 in the Chinoz District and Yangiyul city according to the daily picked raw cotton materials of enterprises and organizations

October 4, 2019

№	Head of cotton brigade	Telephone number (withheld)	Enterprises and Organizations	Numbers of pickers			Picked cotton (kg)			
				Plan	Actual	Difference (+:-)	Plan	In one day	From the beginning of season	Average kg
				2300	1 864	-646	119 000	93 800	803 558	50,3
			By head of the 4 th state tax department's (STD) city area	600	310	-290	30 000	14 800	142 300	47,7
19	Turapov Orif		STD entrepreneurs	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
20	Begmatov Xayrulla		STD entrepreneurs	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
21	Gulomov Ziyovuddin		STD entrepreneurs	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
22	Muslimov Shaxboz		STD entrepreneurs	100	62	-38	5 000	2 950	28 430	47,6
23	Sadullayev Begzod		STD entrepreneurs	100	62	-38	5 000	3 000	28 580	48,4

officers to provide pickers so he arrested people for public drunkenness and told them they had the choice of spending 15 days in administrative detention or being sent to Syrdarya or Jizzakh to pick cotton.²⁰ Monitors also received confirmed reports of the widespread mobilization of police, military conscripts and cadets in the cotton harvest.

One police officer who paid for a replacement picker for the duration of the harvest said, “We aren’t supposed to call this ‘forced labor’ anymore, so now we call it mandatory help for the harvest.”²¹



“We aren’t supposed to call this ‘forced labor’ anymore, so now we call it mandatory help for the harvest.”

Public utilities and enterprises, banks, and companies

Uzbek Forum found that employees from mid-level sectors such as public utilities, banks, state enterprises, local administrative agencies, and companies were mobilized to pick cotton or forced to hire replacement pickers in all regions monitored, often from early on in the harvest. As the prohibition of mobilizing workers in health and education has taken root, the forced labor burden has shifted to employees in other sectors that are still subject to the control or influence of officials.²² An employee of energy company UZBEKENERGO, said that she and 100 other employees were sent to pick cotton based on an order from the *hokim* and they could not refuse otherwise they risked their jobs.²³ She and other employees also complained of long hours and poor living conditions.²⁴ Pickers from these sectors were mobilized for longer periods than employees mobilized from health and education and picked cotton from 15-45 days. In addition to picking cotton, some of these employees, especially from the tax inspection or local *hokimiats*, also had to recruit cotton pickers.²⁵



Employees of “Mubarak QIZ” Ltd gas processing plant on their way to pick cotton. September 30, 2020, Kashkadarya region, Mubarak district. © Ozodlik

Several employees from these sectors expressed a clear understanding that the picking burden on them had increased because of public commitments to avoid sending health and education employees to the fields. A water utility employee said “Am I picking of my own will? No, but this year they have freed the teachers and nurses and so the burden falls to us. All districts must mobilize pickers from public organizations.”²⁶ Similarly, a maintenance worker said, “Around 300 people work in the public maintenance department. All season we are picking cotton: street sweepers, cemetery tenders, guards, gardeners. In some districts the maintenance department employees up to 800 people. We are all in the fields from the beginning to the end of the cotton harvest. Especially now that teachers have been freed from picking, we are picking to make up for them.”²⁷

Employees from these sectors said they could not risk refusing because they did not want to put their jobs at risk. Those who do not want to pick cotton have no adequate means of protecting their rights through independent trade unions or confidential grievance mechanisms at work. Refusing a boss's directive to pick cotton means assuming the risk that they could lose their jobs or face other consequences. A factory worker appealed to the head of her labor union to help her avoid forced labor. She said the union head made her go to the fields where she picked cotton for 45 days in another district away from home. She said, "Now we are free from cotton until next year. They said that next year the cotton will be picked by machines. I hope to god this is true... after all, the cluster is the one that needs the cotton in the first place."²⁸

Some said that their bosses directly threatened to fire employees who refused to pick cotton. For example, a utility engineer said that she did not want to pick cotton because she is the single mother of a daughter with a disability and did not want to leave her for weeks while she picked cotton in another district. She described her dilemma:

It is foolish because I did not study to become an engineer so I could pick cotton. We were told to go to the fields from September 15. Our director said at a staff meeting that we should arrive at 6 a.m. the next day with our things ready to pick cotton in Ulugnor [another district]. He said, 'no complaints will be accepted,' and looked at me. What else could I do? I went to see him in his office anyway and explained that I can't go to pick cotton [and stay] overnight. He took a piece of paper and told me to write my resignation. He said, 'I am not going to put up with getting abuse dumped on me by the regional leaders because of you.'²⁹

The employee ultimately hired someone to stay with her daughter while she went to the fields, but said she had many problems as a result.³⁰

Health and education workers, small businesses, and market stall owners

Despite the commitment not to mobilize health and education employees, officials still turned to employees from these sectors later in the season, as they began to grapple with labor shortfalls by the middle of the season, in some cases calling the work *khashar*, a form of community service that is supposed to be voluntary.³¹ It is a positive development that pickers from these sectors worked in reduced numbers than previous years and for fewer days, with some just picking for a few days or only on weekends. Several expressed frustration that if they must be mobilized to pick cotton that they were mobilized so late in the season when they could not even earn very much money.³²

However, despite the public commitment to free health and education employees from cotton work, many expressed that they could not refuse or that it was preferable to pick cotton to avoid risking their jobs or causing problems with their boss.³³ A kindergarten caregiver said, "We did as we were told or we would have been left without our jobs. We did not call the hotline because they [the government] are forcing me to pick cotton and at the same time putting up banners that say forced labor is prohibited!"³⁴

Officials, especially tax authorities, also increased extortion of small business owners, such as shopkeepers and market stall holders, to hire pickers or contribute money to pay pickers by the middle of the season.³⁵

On November 2, independent human rights activists Elena Urlaeva and Solmaz Akhmedova visited the Cotton Information Headquarters for Sector 4, the sector under the supervision of the tax inspectorate, in the Chinaz district of the Tashkent region. They found evidence that the state tax inspectorate had to mobilize cotton pickers from among entrepreneurs, including a document entitled "Information on the daily amount of cotton to be harvested by enterprises and organizations sent from Yangiyul city to Chinaz district for the cotton harvest 2019." The document, dated October 4, states that the state tax inspectorate was required to recruit 2,300 entrepreneurs for the cotton harvest. The report states that 1,864 entrepreneurs were actually recruited and had picked about 804 tons of cotton.³⁶

Early mobilization of health and education employees in Karakalpakstan

An exception to the later mobilization of employees from health and education institutions was Karakalpakstan, where some institutions were ordered to send employees from the beginning of the harvest and many worked until the end, in mid to late November.³⁷ For example, a public health employee said that her institution started sending 30 percent of employees at a time to pick cotton from September 15, the official start of the harvest.³⁸ Medical employees emphasized that the orders to pick cotton came from ministry of health officials to their directors and that they could not refuse. A medical worker who hired a replacement picker said that she did not want to complain because she supported her family on her hospital salary and could not risk losing it.³⁹

Education institutions likewise sent employees to the fields starting early in the harvest to pick for the whole season.⁴⁰ For example, an employee of the Nukus Economic College reported that of the college's 100 employees, it sent approximately 20 technical staff and five to seven teachers to pick cotton on daily shifts from September 25 to early November.⁴¹ During an interview with a school employee, a teacher approached the Uzbek Forum monitor and said, "Why didn't you come to the Turan stadium where they are sending employees to pick cotton every day? No one goes of his own will to pick cotton in the cold at 7:30 in the morning. Why don't you film it and show the public what is going on?"⁴² The teacher explained that he was unaware that it was prohibited to send teachers for daily picking shifts, and not just overnight shifts and told the monitor that he had hired a replacement picker.⁴³

Institutions that provided pickers "on their own initiative"

Monitors found a few cases of institutions sending pickers apparently "on their own initiative" rather than in direct response to orders from the *hokim*. Some of these cases appeared performative of institutions modeling national duty. For example, a district *hokimiat* employee told Uzbek Forum monitors that the prosecutor's office sent its staff to pick cotton apparently on their own initiative, but that the prosecutors demanded extravagant lunches and *kurpachi* (thin mattresses) to sit on for their rest breaks. The employee said that the farmer was unhappy because he needed cotton pickers, "not guests who came to enjoy a picnic."⁴⁴ Indeed, Uzbekistan would also likely be better served if its prosecutors worked to uphold justice and not attempt to normalize public sector employees picking cotton.⁴⁵



Uzbekistan would also likely be better served if its prosecutors worked to uphold justice and not attempt to normalize public sector employees picking cotton.

Other cases may be evidence of entrenched interests or an understanding of the *hokim's* expectation. An employee of a labor center run by the Ministry of Labor said that employees of the center were sent on his boss's "own initiative to show the *hokim* that he is helping the district—we are supposed to be combatting forced labor but instead we are doing it ourselves."⁴⁶ In another example, Maxam-Chirchiq, a subsidiary of Ammofos-Maxam, one of the largest mineral fertilizers in Uzbekistan and a joint Uzbek-Spanish company that is part of the joint stock conglomerate Uzkimyosanoat, apparently paid for thousands of cotton pickers "on its own initiative." In response to an inquiry from a human rights defender about whether Maxam-Chirchiq's employees picked cotton in 2019, the local labor center investigated and found that Maxam had hired pickers voluntarily.⁴⁷ It obtained a statement from Maxam-Chirchiq's chairman that during the 2019 harvest it hired 2,196 voluntary pickers whom it paid 40,000 soums per day (approximately US \$4) to pick cotton on cotton clusters and farms as a voluntary contribution to the cotton harvest.⁴⁸ This amounts to approximately US \$8,784 per day, or US \$263,520 if the pickers worked for a month. The labor center did not inquire why the company felt obliged to make such a contribution. In 2018, Maxam-Chirchiq forcibly sent its employees to pick cotton, one of whom died during the harvest.⁴⁹ Cases such as these raise serious concerns about the continued role of local officials in the cotton harvest because of the influence they wield in their regions and underscores the urgent need to extricate *hokims* from agriculture beyond the elimination of quotas and to develop fair recruitment systems.



« MAXAM-CHIRCHIQ »

Aksiyadorlik Jamiyati
Chirchiq shahri

Joint Stock Society, Chirchiq, Tashkent Region

Акционерное Общество «MAXAM-CHIRCHIQ» г. Чирчик

111708, O'zbekiston Respublikasi, Toshkent viloyati, Chirchiq shahri, Toshkent ko'chasi, 2-uy
Telefon: (+9987071) 6-40-79, Faks: 6-57-49, 5-15-75; Telecopy: «ZAPYA» 116653; E-Mail: info@maxam-chirchiq.uz
Web-site: www.maxam-chirchiq.uz; x/y 20210000100128573001 «O'zbekiston sanoat-qurilish banki» Chirchiq bo'limi
bank kodi 00863, INN № 200941518

21.02.2020 йил № 30-2/9
Sizing № _____

МАЪЛУМОТНОМА

Берилди ушбу маълумотнома шу ҳақдаким, 2019 йил пахта йиғим-терим мавсумида “Максам-Чирчик” АЖ ишчи ходимлари пахта теримида катнашишга жалб қилинмаган.

Пахта хом ашёсини уюшқоклик ва тез йиғиб-териб олишга уз хиссамизни кушиш учун, кластер ва фермер хужаликларига уюшмаган аҳоли сафидан ихтиёрий теримчилар отрядлари шакллантирилишига кумаклашилди. Шу мақсадда 2196 нафар ихтиёрий теримчилар билан “Максам-Чирчик” АЖ уртасида “фукаровий-хукукий шартнома” имзоланган ва ҳар бир теримчига кулик 40000 сумдан ойлик маоши тайинланган.

Кластер ва фермер хужаликлари билан ҳар бир ихтиёрий теримчи уртасида узаро “хизмат курсатиш ҳақида фукаровий-хукукий тусдаги шартнома” имзоланган.

Барча отрядлар учун яшаш шарт-шароитлари Урта-Чирчик туманида жойлашган кластер ва фермер хужаликлари томонидан таъминлаб берилган.

Пахта йиғим-терими мавсумида ихтиёрий теримчилар томонидан норозилиги буйича ҳеч қандай шикоят ва ариза келиб тушмаган.

“Максам-Чирчик” АЖ
Бошқаруви Раиси

Сайдахмедов Х.А.

000015

Statement signed by the managing director of JSC Maxam Chirchiq stating that during the cotton season of 2019 the company hired 2,196 voluntary cotton pickers with a payment of 40,000 soums (approximately \$ 4) per day “to contribute to the swift picking of cotton”.
February 21, 2020, Tashkent region. © Elena Urlaeva

Spotlight: Uzbek Forum interview with Labor Center employee, Buvida district, Fergana

Why are different employees required to pay different amounts to hire cotton pickers?

Employees who earn a good salary have to hire pickers for ten days. Whoever has less experience and fewer qualifications and therefore a smaller salary only has to hire a picker to work for five days. I only hired one woman [to pick cotton] for five days. I paid her 225,000 soums (approximately US \$22). In addition, she earned about 400,000 soums (approximately US \$40) picking cotton. This woman, a day laborer, picks cotton for various employees.

What happens if you refuse to hire cotton pickers?

You know, cotton enters our bloodstream together with our mothers' milk. We understand that it should not be this way. We should not have to hire cotton pickers but, nonetheless, every autumn all organizations prepare for the cotton harvest. Some employees set aside money in advance to hire pickers. This year no one said anything about the cotton harvest until mid-October and we were all surprised that we hadn't been sent to the fields. We were waiting for the order. And then, on October 15, they asked us to go to the fields to help with the harvest.

Did they ask you or order you?

You could say it is something in between. It is the kind of "request" that you cannot refuse. It was not like it used to be, when they would say 'if you don't go to the fields then you must submit your resignation.' They didn't say it like that, but they still asked us to go. Every year at this time we pick cotton. Everyone is used to this.

Who told you that you need to pick cotton or hire a picker?

My boss. I didn't go, although some other employees did. They were picked up in a minibus from our office.

Did you see posters about the prohibition on forced labor?

Of course. I work in a labor and employment center of the Ministry of Labor!

Why do you think that people don't complain about forced labor?

Because employees of every organization know that the *hokimiat* ordered it—their boss is not the one who invented the cotton harvest and people feel uncomfortable complaining about their own boss since they understand he is not very responsible for this....Overall, the reforms in Tashkent have not yet reached us.

Workers in Insecure Employment Cannot Refuse to Pick Cotton

Uzbekistan has high unemployment rates as well as high rates of underemployment, whereby two or three employees may share a single full-time position, each only working a few shifts per week. This puts many workers in a vulnerable employment situation. Work is hard to come by and there are many potential employees for most jobs. Even skilled workers such as teachers or nurses understand that they can easily be replaced and are thus reluctant to harm relations with supervisors for fear of losing their jobs. Uzbekistan is also a hierarchical system with a decades-long history of forced labor largely organized through employers, so many employees understand that picking cotton or doing other work unconnected to their jobs is the "price" of employment.

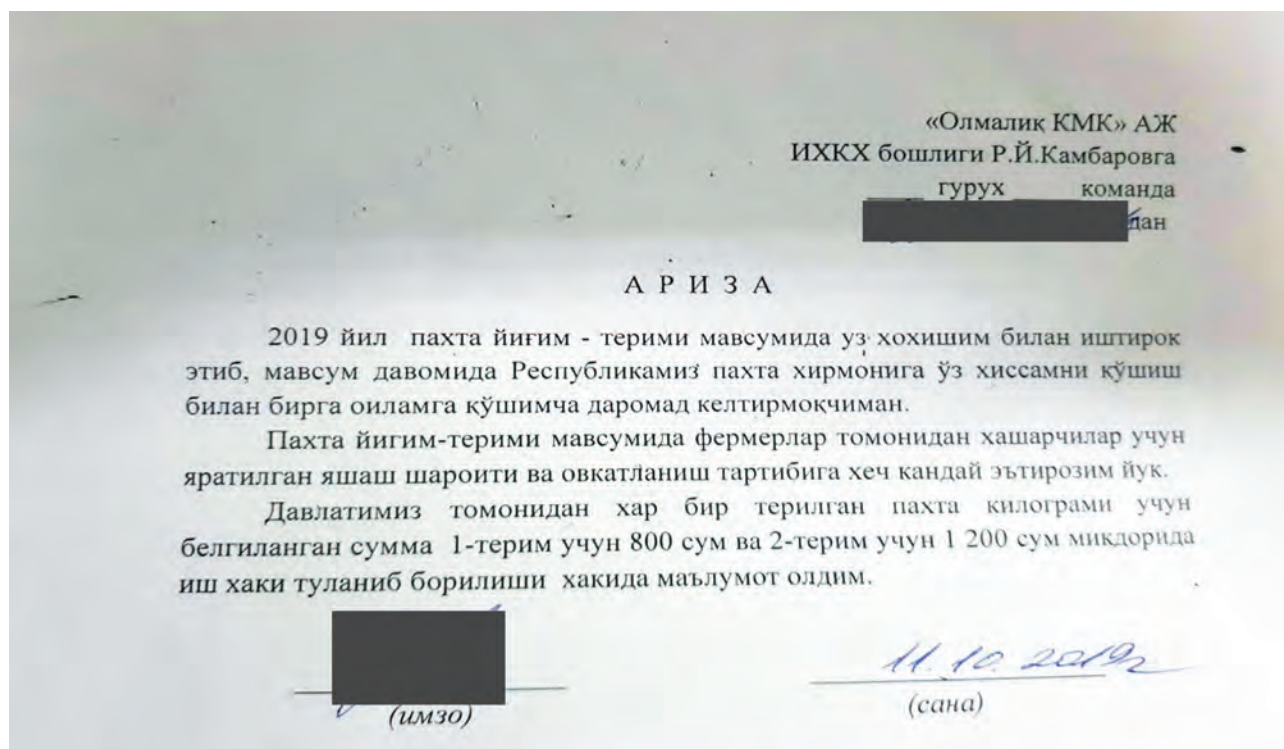
Many people forcibly mobilized to pick cotton in 2019 reported that they experienced less pressure than in previous years or that their bosses "asked" them instead of ordering them to pick. This is surely a positive development compared to the fear, threats, stresses, and demands of previous harvests but this does not indicate that these employees necessarily felt able to refuse to pick cotton without fear of consequences. While some people faced

an explicit consequence, such as dismissal, loss of benefits or payment for a replacement picker, others explained that they feared a consequence because of *who* was asking them to pick cotton. These people were mobilized to pick cotton by someone who exerts control over their material well-being—their jobs, their benefits, or their businesses. Some organizations, especially law enforcement and government agencies, have deeply engrained hierarchies where refusing a request or order from a supervisor is considered insubordination. Employment protections are very weak. There are no independent workers' organizations or trade unions that will stand up for workers when they are "asked" to pick cotton. The accountability system relies on vulnerable employees to refuse to pick cotton and suffer the consequences or to self-report forced labor to government-controlled channels.

When requests to pick cotton or pay for replacement pickers come from officials, especially law enforcement, people understand that there is a consequence for refusal. If a tax inspector requests money for the harvest from a shopkeeper, the shopkeeper understands that refusal carries an implicit risk that his shop could face problems as a consequence and that no one will protect him. Workers reported that it is easier to avoid problems by picking cotton for a few days or weeks than risk their livelihoods.



Workers reported that it is easier to avoid problems by picking cotton for a few days or weeks than risk their livelihoods.



Statement from an employee of the Almalıy Mining and Metallurgical Combine on the intention to pick cotton (name of the worker withheld).

I intend to pick cotton during the cotton season of 2019 in order to contribute to the cotton harvest and earn extra money for my family. I have no complaints about the conditions of accommodation or food. I received information that the state will pay 800 soums per 1 kg for the first and 1,200 soums per kg for the second cotton harvest.

Signature. October 11, 2019

Workers fear consequences for refusing to pick cotton when recruited by someone with power over them

“My boss won’t fire us, but she will make my life difficult at work.” - Nurse 1, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 26, 2019

“My business will have problems with the tax inspectors.” - Market seller 1, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 15, 2019

“My business will have problems. The tax inspector said, ‘If you want to help [the harvest] then help. If you don’t, whatever happens is your fault.’ - Market seller 2, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 15, 2019

“If you refuse, they won’t leave you alone and you don’t want to get in trouble with your boss. You have to work with him every day.” - Medical worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 26, 2019

“I can’t refuse my director’s requests because later, when I need something, she will refuse me.” - Teacher, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 27, 2019

“If we refuse to pick cotton the director will consider it insubordination and we could lose our jobs. Work is hard to find.” - Bank worker, Shavot district, Khorezm region, November 20, 2019

“If I refuse, the mahalla will take it out on me and never leave me alone.” - Mahalla picker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, October 20, 2019

“We can’t refuse - the word of the director is law.” - Teacher, Shavot district, Khorezm, October 13, 2019

“If I don’t provide cotton pickers, my land could be taken away. They won’t do it openly as they did in the past, but it can still happen.” - Fruit and vegetable farmer, Fergana district, Fergana, October 8, 2019

“I am sent to pick cotton by my boss—this means I have to go.” - Maintenance department worker, Bagdad district, Fergana, October 25, 2019

“You have to pay for pickers or otherwise they’ll find problems. Can you really argue with the tax police? They can find millions of soums worth of violations.” - Shopkeeper, Buvaida district, Fergana, October 21, 2019

The public information and awareness campaigns on the prohibition of forced labor should be expanded. Even though the public has low levels of trust in public slogans and promises, the information campaigns launched over the last several years have helped weaken the system of employers and officials openly threatening and forcing people to pick cotton. Instead, appeals to patriotism such as calls to participate in *khashar* or “requests that are impossible to refuse” are made.

The ILO has said that since forced labor is an individual determination, it is not possible to determine that a person is subjected to forced labor based on the mode of recruitment.⁵⁰ Therefore, just because someone is sent to pick cotton by his or her employer does not indicate that he or she is in forced labor. This analysis comports with the legal definition of forced labor, which requires that the labor be both involuntary and under threat of penalty.⁵¹ This also

comports with the findings of Uzbek Forum’s monitoring, which found that some people ordered to pick cotton by their employers and who would have faced consequences for refusal, did not object to picking cotton. Some - especially those with sufficient means to purchase extra cotton to meet their picking quotas and extra food to supplement what was provided - viewed cotton picking as respite from office work. However, this analysis ignores the reality of Uzbekistan, where the government is seeking to dismantle a massive system of forced labor that for decades mobilized hundreds of thousands of forced laborers through their educational institutions or places of employment. It also ignores other devastating impacts of mobilization of cotton pickers through employers.



“During the cotton season we just have to hope that there will be no major fires or it will be very bad and everyone in the community will know that we failed because we were away picking cotton.”

The majority of employees interviewed by Uzbek Forum monitors expressed the desire to be left alone to do their jobs but were afraid to refuse to pick cotton because they said that doing so would put their employment at risk. The purely individual analysis of forced labor also fails to capture the disastrous effects of forced labor mobilization on the productivity and services of the workplaces that provide pickers. For example, a firefighter, who together with 25 percent of his brigade, was sent from Fergana to pick cotton in Jizzakh from mid-September to mid-November said, “During the cotton season we just have to hope that there will be no major fires or it will be very bad and everyone in the community will know that we failed because we were away picking cotton.”⁵² It also does not account for the additional uncompensated labor burden on the workers keeping a factory running or a business or organization operating while some employees were sent to pick cotton.⁵³ A district employee said that all the administration employees had to pick cotton or pay for replacement pickers, but she was exempted because she was pregnant. The employee said that she decided to pick cotton anyway because if she had stayed in the office all of the extra work would have fallen to her.⁵⁴

Working Conditions

Of the 2,325 harvest survey respondents who answered the question about working conditions, 751, or 32 percent, reported at least one type of substandard working conditions (respondents could choose multiple responses). Although not nationally representative, that means nearly a third of all respondents experienced some form of duress during their participation. Though low frequencies were indicated for each of the violations, these findings are important given the severity of those violations:

	Count	Percentage of total
Quality of food was poor/quantity was insufficient	235	10%
Insufficient access to clean water	253	11%
No access to hygiene facilities	203	9%
Living conditions were substandard	203	9%
We were made to work long hours	152	7%
People shouted at or were insulting to workers	118	5%
People beat or hit workers	112	5%
Didn't get paid properly (e.g. on time, correct amount)	150	6%
Conditions were fine (no complaints)	1,574	68%
TOTAL	3,000	*
n = 2,325		

*Percentage adds up to more than 100 because respondent could select multiple options.

Based on the survey responses, poor working conditions remain a problem in the cotton harvest. In terms of labor rights, the data clearly demonstrate that violations of human rights occurred, including physical assault and lack of proper access to food, sanitary facilities and clean water. For instance, a soldier interviewed by Uzbek Forum said that soldiers who did not pick the daily quota of 80 kilos could be beaten.⁵⁵ Another said that he bought cotton at inflated prices from other pickers to meet the quota otherwise he would be punished with extra work or made to do strenuous physical exercise at night.⁵⁶ In interviews with Uzbek Forum monitors some pickers complained about working and living conditions, especially poor and insufficient food, lack of access to safe drinking water, and hygiene facilities.⁵⁷ Physical insecurity and personal humiliation were both reported, as well as overwork and wage theft.



Living quarters of voluntary cotton pickers hired by cadastral service workers showing stretchers converted into beds for cotton pickers. October 20, 2019, Karasu Tashkent region. © Elena Urlaeva

Weak Accountability System

While the government has made significant strides in forced labor prevention in cotton harvesting, especially through public awareness raising, it has not yet enacted and implemented adequate measures to prosecute perpetrators and protect victims. So far government measures have emphasized administrative fines for perpetrators, and these have progressively increased in recent years. However, no information has been made available on steps the government has taken to provide remedies to victims.

Meaningful accountability for forced labor is a critical part of the fight against forced labor. Here the government's record is mixed. The labor inspectorate, although expanded, is woefully understaffed and under-resourced, with just 400 labor inspectors for a population of more than 33 million people and a cotton harvest requiring more than 1.75 million pickers. As a result, the accountability system for forced labor largely hinges on workers, many of whom are in vulnerable employment situations who fear losing their jobs and are reluctant to complain about forced labor to feedback mechanism hotlines in which there is little public trust. Even after five years of operation, the number of cases these hotlines handle remains vanishingly small as a proportion of the number of cotton pickers or of the 102,000 people the ILO estimated to be in conditions of forced labor. One improvement in 2019 was that the Labor Inspection also monitored complaints made on *Pakhtagram* and other cases reported by *Ozodlik* and other media.

Although the government announced that 259 people were punished for forced labor violations in the 2019 harvest, the Ministry of Labor published a list of just 43 officials who had been fined.⁵⁸ It is unclear why other cases of forced labor violations were not made publicly available, as publicity would promote awareness and perhaps serve as a deterrent. Troublingly, in addition to being under-resourced, the Labor Inspection does not appear to have the mandate or expertise to pursue investigations of forced labor up the chain of command to hold responsible officials to account, instead punishing heads of institutions that have no connection to the cotton sector. For instance, labor inspectors fined four school directors in a single district in Karakalpakstan, apparently without investigating whether the directors were acting on orders from above or what other factors may have caused the directors to force their employees to pick cotton despite the prohibition of mobilizing teachers in the harvest.⁵⁹

Notably, the list of those punished for forced labor violations does not include any law enforcement, emergencies services, or military officials, although there is clear evidence that personnel from these agencies were mobilized to pick cotton, something that could not have happened without explicit instruction by the responsible ministries. The ILO's Third-Party Monitoring of the 2019 harvest found that military conscripts were mobilized to pick cotton in violation of the ILO Conventions concerning forced labor, yet the government does not appear to have investigated these cases or held any military or other officials to account.⁶⁰ The explanation given, that conscripts were used as a "temporary measure" while privatization is implemented, lacks all credibility.⁶¹ If the military conscripts picked on privatized cluster farms, it could only have occurred through government coordination and to serve a government purpose. If privatized clusters could not find sufficient voluntary labor, the appropriate remedies would include increasing rates paid to attract workers and to invest in developing appropriate recruitment channels. Government compensation for labor shortages by providing forced pickers does not incentivize clusters to make the necessary investments to ensure that there is no forced labor in their supply chains.



Government compensation for labor shortages by providing forced pickers does not incentivize clusters to make the necessary investments to ensure that there is no forced labor in their supply chains.

The feedback mechanisms run by the Ministry of Labor and the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan for citizens to report forced labor remain weak and appear to lack widespread trust among the population. People who call hotlines are required to give their full name, address, passport, and employment details to register a complaint,

although the Ministry of Labor has said that an anonymous option is available through its Telegram channel. Ongoing persecution of civil society activists and perceived critics also serves to undermine the public's willingness to report forced labor.

Inspections usually do not go up the chain of command but have targeted low-level officials and supervisors who are themselves pressured to provide cotton pickers. Penalties are ineffective, unevenly applied, and not made consistently public. The cases publicized from the 2019 harvest show that those disciplined for forced labor were supervisors or low-level officials in occupations that have nothing to do with the cotton sector, such as bank managers and heads of clinics. This begs the question why these officials were motivated to send their employees to pick cotton. An Uzbek Forum monitor in Karakalpakstan reported the head of a clinic at a district hospital who instructed hospital employees to pick cotton. A labor inspector found that the doctor had already been fined for forced labor on October 14. The monitor determined that the doctor continued to send employees to the fields despite having been fined, highlighting that the motivation to send employees to the fields outweighed the deterrent effect of the fines.⁶²

In January 2020, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed new legislation criminalizing the repeated use of forced labor, a welcome move, but one that should be extended to any use of forced labor and not just for repeat offenders. This means, however, that mid-level officials, heads of organizations, chief doctors and school principals still face a difficult dilemma when ordered to send employees to pick cotton: either they risk losing their jobs—as in a case reported by Ozodlik of a banker in the Fergana region who was ordered by the district *hokim* to find 20 cotton pickers and was fired for refusing - or they risk facing fines or even criminal sanctions.⁶³

Labor inspectorates must change their approach to investigating forced labor and drill deeper into the chain of command. This would result in fewer mid-level officials and heads of organizations being held responsible for the actions of high-ranking officials, primarily heads of regions, who openly or covertly coerce employees to go to the cotton fields.

Obstacles to Independent Civil Society

A diverse, vibrant, truly independent civil society is crucial for reforms, including those to end forced labor, to take root and become sustainable and irreversible. Civil society plays a key role in ensuring transparency and accountability, identifying, documenting, and bringing to light violations. While the government has made commitments to allow independent monitoring of the cotton harvest, it has not created an enabling environment for the free operation of independent human rights activists or civil society organizations and continues to interfere with the work of independent monitors, including through arbitrary detention and spurious criminal charges. Indeed, reforms in this area fall far short of reforms in other areas related to forced labor but are no less important.

At the request of the government of Uzbekistan, the Cotton Campaign prepared an updated Roadmap of Reforms to end forced labor based on extensive consultations with campaign members, experts, and other stakeholders, which it delivered in June 2019. The Roadmap includes core objectives across three reforms in three reform areas: End Systemic Forced Labor; Enact Structural Reforms; Empower Civil Society.⁶⁴ The document emphasizes that “The three core objectives are complementary and mutually reinforcing: systemic forced labor cannot be eliminated without the enactment of structural reforms; neither can be achieved without the empowerment of civil society to ensure transparency and accountability across every aspect of the reform process.”⁶⁵ While the government has unarguably made laudable progress on the first two core objectives of the Cotton Campaign's Roadmap, progress on the third objective, empowering civil society, has lagged significantly. The need to address policy gaps in this area is urgent, particularly given the government's determination to regain the confidence of brands and retailers to begin sourcing Uzbek cotton again. Two major apparel associations recently published an article praising progress in Uzbekistan but emphasizing that brands need further assurances before they will be willing to source cotton products from

Uzbekistan because they are subject to strict legal and ethical requirements regarding their supply chains. They emphasize also that “Apparel brands look for countries with governments that strive to respect basic civic freedoms—freedom of association, assembly and expression—and allow space for civil society voices and advocates. We are concerned that progress toward the third objective of the Cotton Campaign’s Roadmap—empowering civil society—is lagging.”⁶⁶ Further, the singular attention to forced labor in the cotton supply chain has obscured attention to pervasive state-sponsored forced labor in other sectors, such as street cleaning, public beautification, housing reconstruction and cultivation of silk cocoons.⁶⁷

The weakness of the accountability system and the woefully understaffed labor inspectorate especially underscore the critical need for independent labor unions, workers’ organizations and other civil society organizations. Unions and workers’ organizations can empower workers to report on violations happening in their own workplaces and provide a platform for remediating labor abuses. Civil society organizations, such as labor and human rights NGOs can play an important role in conducting community monitoring and advocating for transparency and accountability.

Persecution of labor rights monitors and human rights defenders has decreased over the last several years but not ceased. The government has engaged in dialogue with a group of labor and human rights activists and fostered their participation in the ILO’s Third-Party Monitoring work, a clear improvement over past years. But the government has not shown a broader willingness to open civil society space to allow independent groups to form. In a recent report, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern over freedom of association in Uzbekistan and, in particular, restrictions on NGOs:

The Committee remains concerned that current legislation continues to impose restrictions on the right to freedom of association, including: (a) unreasonable and burdensome legal and administrative requirements for registering NGOs and political parties; (b) an extensive list of reasons to deny registration; (c) the requirement for NGOs to obtain de facto approval from the Ministry of Justice when travelling abroad or receiving funds from foreign sources; and (d) the prohibition of NGOs from participating in “political activities”. In this regard, the Committee notes with concern the small number of independent self-initiated NGOs registered in [Uzbekistan], the high number of rejections for registration, and that no applications were submitted for the registration of new political parties between 2015 and 2018.⁶⁸

The Committee called on Uzbekistan to bring both its regulations and practice on NGO registration into compliance with its international commitments and to ensure participation of civil society and experts in preparing the new NGO code.⁶⁹

In March 2020, the Ministry of Justice granted registration to Huquqiy Tayanch (Legal Base), the first independent domestic human rights NGO to be registered since 2003. Its founder, Azam Farmonov, a former political prisoner, served as one of the ILO’s civil society monitors for the 2019 harvest. He had previously unsuccessfully attempted to register an NGO focused on the restoration of justice for those wrongfully convicted together with two other former political prisoners (see page 53). The successful establishment of a new human rights organization gave hope that a new chapter was beginning for civil society in Uzbekistan and that independent voices would no longer be shut out of civic space. However, the registration of Huquqiy Tayanch so far unfortunately remains the exception, not the rule. Other independent human rights NGOs have not yet been able to register, despite the government’s stated commitment to end obstacles to registration. There is also continued government interference in the work of some activists, subjecting them to threats, reprisals, or harassment for their work. In addition, the government has failed to take steps to exonerate or provide remedy to those who were wrongfully imprisoned or faced other legal consequences in retaliation for their human rights work. Together, these actions have a chilling effect on independent civil society and send a message that people can face consequences for speaking out or reporting on violations. This chilling effect could also prevent citizens from developing trust in government hotlines or other mechanisms to report forced labor.

NGO Spotlight: Refusal to Register Labor Rights NGO Chiroq

Azimbai Ataniyazov, a longtime human rights defender from Karakalpakstan who has for years worked with Uzbek Forum to monitor forced labor in the cotton sector, has twice received letters from the Ministry of Justice rejecting his application to register his NGO. Together with other activists in Karakalpakstan, Ataniyazov founded the human and labor rights organization Chiroq (Light). The activists in the group have monitored forced labor in cotton production, forced labor of public employees in other sectors, corruption of local officials, access to justice, and other issues.

Ataniyazov submitted an application to register Chiroq on December 23, 2019. On January 9, he received a letter rejecting his application, citing three minor grammatical errors in the paperwork. On February 1, 2020, five members of a Cotton Campaign delegation that had traveled to Uzbekistan to hold meetings with the government on the progress of reforms, traveled to Nukus, the capital city of Karakalpakstan, to meet with Ataniyazov and other activists from Chiroq. Several of the activists were prevented from attending the meeting by interference orchestrated by the authorities and another was warned.

Human rights defender and member of the ILO's civil society monitoring group, Arslanbay Uteпов, was stopped by a traffic inspector early in the morning to meet with the Cotton Campaign members. The inspector took him to the district *hokimiat*, where he was held until midday and warned against interactions with international human rights organizations. Zariпbay Reymov, member and co-founder of Chiroq, was also stopped by police officers early in the morning on his way to the meeting. The officers confiscated his phone and detained him at the police station until the afternoon to prevent him from attending the meeting. The same day, another Chiroq co-founder, Guldana Seidemetova, was urgently summoned to the clinic where she works, although it was Saturday and her day off. Her boss informed her that a commission from Tashkent was arriving and that all employees of the clinic had to be present at work. Seidemetova dutifully followed the order, but the commission did not show up.⁷⁰

Murat Ubbinyazov, another Chiroq co-founder, told the Cotton Campaign members that the previous evening he received a phone call from someone he did not know who asked him to come outside. When he did, he saw a car waiting near his door with no number plate. A man in the car did not give his name but said he worked for the Ministry of the Interior. He asked Murod to get in so they could talk. Ubbinyazov said the man warned him against meeting with the Cotton Campaign group the next day, telling him that Ataniyazov was a liar who faked images of children picking cotton to harm Uzbekistan's reputation and told him, "Chiroq will never receive registration."⁷¹

Following the first rejection of Chiroq's registration application, Ataniyazov again worked to gather the necessary documents. According to regulations governing NGO registration, the Ministry of Justice retains the documents of any group whose application for registration is rejected, requiring it start the application process over if it chooses to resubmit. On March 31, Ataniyazov received the second rejection of Chiroq's registration application. The refusal letter listed several instances where Chiroq's documents did not comply with NGO regulations, even though these were not provided as grounds for the first refusal. The Ministry also insisted that Chiroq provide the signatures for all 12 co-founders even though two members had decided to step back from formal association with Chiroq due to harassment and threats by the authorities.⁷² The law requires the signatures of only ten co-founders.

More troublingly, the Ministry of Justice instructed Chiroq to change its charter to remove references to “engaging with international and local human rights organizations;” to exclude references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and to remove trial monitoring from its list of activities, among other changes.⁷³

The rejection of Chiroq’s registration comes at a time when Uzbekistan seeks to promote responsible sourcing and investment in the country’s cotton sector. During meetings with the Cotton Campaign delegation earlier this year, several officials openly acknowledged that Uzbekistan urgently needs to allow a vibrant and independent civil society to take hold as an indicator of the rule of law, respect for transparency, accountability, and human rights. Refusal to register labor and human rights NGOs is frustrating and disheartening to activists and also to responsible investors, themselves subject to strict human rights obligations, who are waiting for assurances that it is safe to invest in a country that has been badly tainted by an appalling human rights record.

Additional examples of interference in civil society follow:

- The government twice rejected the registration attempts in February and May 2019 of **Restoration of Justice**, an NGO that seeks to restore rights to people wrongfully imprisoned. The application was filed by three former political prisoners.⁷⁴ Eventually, the three decided to go their separate ways. One member, Azam Farmonov, successfully registered his organization, Huquqiy Tayanch (see above). Another, Agzam Turgunov, a long-time human rights defender who served more than nine years in prison on politically-motivated charges, formed his own organization called Human Rights House.⁷⁵ Turgunov submitted his registration application on February 6.⁷⁶ He received notice that his application was denied and he resubmitted his registration application on May 20.⁷⁷
- On October 18, 2019, **Makhmud Rajab** a poet, journalist, and labor rights monitor from Khorezm province in northwest Uzbekistan, was sentenced to a five-and-a-half-year suspended sentence on criminal charges of smuggling “extremist” materials.⁷⁸ Rajab was taken into custody on September 22, when he staged a “protest march” to Tashkent to request that charges brought against him be dropped. He was sentenced to ten days’ administrative arrest and released on October 3. Rajab has reported on forced labor and child labor in the cotton sector since 2009, including as a monitor for Uzbek Forum. He is no longer able to carry out his labor rights work due to fears that he will be found in violation of the terms of his sentence and sent to prison.⁷⁹
- In September 2019, blogger and activist **Nafosat Ollashukorova**, who covered the arrest of Makhmud Rajab, was first held under administrative arrest and then forcibly detained in a psychiatric hospital for almost three months.⁸⁰ She has no history of mental illness and has been given no access to her medical files nor information on what medication she was forcibly administered. Since her release in December, she complained of further attempts to detain her and has since left the country in fear of her life. Ollashukorova is one of three activists to flee Uzbekistan in the space of 8 months due to reprisals from the authorities which they believe are related to their human rights work.
- Activist and journalist **Malokhat Eshonqulova** faces criminal charges of slander and defamation for a June 2019 video report she published accusing a district official of corruption.⁸¹ Eshonqulova subsequently left Uzbekistan, fearing she could be arrested and is afraid to return. Eshonqulova has reported extensively on forced labor in the cotton harvest in partnership with the Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan as well as with Uzbek Forum.

- Criminal charges for illegal border crossing remained pending against **Dmitry Tikhonov**, a journalist and human rights defender from the Tashkent region who documented forced labor for Uzbek Forum and was forced to flee Uzbekistan in 2016 following an apparent arson attack on his home office. In 2018, Tikhonov was included on a “Wanted” poster in Uzbekistan. Tikhonov has sought resolution of his case so that he can safely return to Uzbekistan.
- Labor rights activist **Fakhriddin Tillayev**, was released from prison in May 2018. In 2014 Tillayev and fellow activist Nuriddin Jumaniyazov were sentenced to eight and six years respectively on trumped up charges in retaliation for organizing an independent labor union. Jumaniyazov and Tillayev were falsely accused of human trafficking, tortured and convicted in a trial that violated fair trial standards. Jumaniyazov apparently died in prison of complications related to diabetes on December 31, 2016, but this information was not made public until June 15. Tillayev remains in poor health, unable to work, and in debt due to costs related to his time in prison. He has received no compensation and his criminal conviction stands.⁸²
- Long-time human rights activist **Elena Urlaeva**, who has extensively monitored forced labor in the cotton sector, including in the 2019 harvest, remains stripped of her legal capacity and under guardianship, preventing her from owning property or taking legal action on her own behalf.

Looking Ahead to 2020: Positive Developments and Ongoing Risks

End to State Quota System

On February 5, 2020, at an ILO conference in Tashkent, Minister of Agriculture Jamshid Khodjaev announced an end to the imposition of state quotas for cotton production on regions and districts and an end to the role of *hokims* in enforcing them.⁸³ This change, enshrined in a decree signed a month later, effectively canceled the quotas that had already been established for the 2020 season.⁸⁴ This welcome reform is a significant, positive development. Uzbek Forum and the Cotton Campaign have long advocated for an end to the quota system and identified its abolition as a key outcome in its Roadmap of Reforms.⁸⁵ Abolition of the quota system and removal of the responsibility of *hokims* to meet quotas should in theory reduce or eliminate incentives for local officials to mobilize forced laborers to pick cotton.

The 2020 harvest will be a critical moment for the Uzbek government to demonstrate whether the reforms enacted thus far are durable and sustainable. However, the risk remains that the state quota system will simply take root at the district level and *hokims* will continue to exert their influence and control over the cotton harvest.

Clusters and the Role of *Hokims*

Despite the elimination of the quota system, local *hokims* continue to exert disproportionate influence over the operation of private cotton clusters in their jurisdictions. The development of cotton clusters comprises a key element of Uzbekistan’s economic reform strategy and *hokims* bear responsibility for ensuring that clusters function successfully, despite their ostensible independence from the state.⁸⁶ It is unclear whether and how this will change in 2020. Emerging evidence suggests that *hokims*—who are appointed by the central government and accountable only to it—continue to wield enormous power over agriculture in their districts. This power extends to the operation of clusters, which are ostensibly private enterprises. *Hokims* can use their power to punish farmers and clusters which do not comply with their orders. On the other side of the equation, clusters may contract with hundreds or more individual farmers and may not have invested in or developed effective means for communicating with farmers about their rights and responsibilities under their contracts. Many clusters appear to rely on the *hokimiat* or other state structures such as the Farmers Council to communicate with their contract farmers. In turn, cluster operators are subject to pressure by the *hokimiat* to inflate contract amounts or make payments to the district for purposes unrelated to cotton production.

The recent case of Sulton Tex Group provides an illustrative example of this problematic dynamic between *hokims* and clusters. The director of Sulton Tex, a cluster with spinning and knitting operations and finished goods production in Karshi, in Kashkadarya region, complained that the local *hokim* continued to exert control over local cotton producers and was demanding money from clusters for purposes unrelated to cotton production.⁸⁷ Sulton Tex attempted to refuse the payments. In apparent retaliation, the *hokim* ordered farmers to rescind their contracts and deputy prime minister Uktam Barnoyev removed Sulton Tex from the cluster registry.⁸⁸ In defending the decision, the *hokimiat* announced that the cluster's director had not attended the almost nearly daily mandatory meetings at the *hokimiat* which often extend until late into the night, during which farmers and local organizations report to the *hokimiat* on their fulfillment of various tasks and orders. The *hokimiat* also complained that the cluster had not invested in the district by building schools or kindergartens or providing aid to residents during the COVID-19 crisis.⁸⁹ This very admission highlights the risk of the continuation of the old system of central control over agriculture, whereby *hokims* exert near total control over agriculture, including farmers and clusters, in their districts.

The state owns all agricultural land and, under current agricultural policy, dictates to farmers what crops they may grow. Cotton and wheat are often grown in parallel, with the planting and irrigation of winter wheat usually occurring while the cotton harvest is still in process. Although most farmers now produce cotton for private clusters instead of the government, they still produce wheat or silk cocoons for government purchase. This makes it even harder to disentangle farmers from intrusion by local officials and keeps them vulnerable to pressure, abuse, and reprisals from officials. Since the government needs to ensure that sufficient cotton is produced for the ambitious production targets set by the cluster system, officials continue to pressure farmers to enter into contracts with clusters and to grow cotton despite the apparent retreat of the state from involvement in the cotton sector and the cancellation of state quotas.

A recent example of this pressure underscores how closely *hokims* and other officials remain involved with cotton production and that farmers remain vulnerable to their pressure despite the cancellation of quotas for the 2020 season. On April 9, 2020, Ozodlik reported that the *hokimiat* of Akkurgan district in the Tashkent region pressured wheat and vegetable farmers to enter into cotton contracts with the Agrocluster cotton cluster and plant cotton on the majority of their land.⁹⁰ Ten farmers wrote a letter to Ozodlik that by order of the regional prosecutor, their wheat and vegetable crops were plowed to force them to plant cotton. The farmers said that they begged officials not to destroy their crops, which included potatoes, beans, peas, and lentils. They said that because of the Covid-19 quarantine the price of vegetables had risen sharply and that they could bring their vegetables to market by early May and help bring prices down since more would be available. A *hokimiat* official speaking on condition of anonymity said that he recognized that destroying farmers' crops is akin to theft but that the order for them to grow cotton had "come from above."⁹¹

New Possibilities

As the Uzbek government promotes the growth of its textile sector and the creation of jobs—a task all the more urgent by the devastating economic impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is eager to access markets in the U.S. and Europe. Currently 305 major brands and retailers from the U.S. and Europe have signed the Uzbek Cotton Pledge, committing them not to knowingly source Uzbek cotton until the practice of forced labor has ended.⁹²

At this stage, the issue is not whether to end the pledge but when and how to do so in a way that can promote responsible sourcing and investment that supports labor and human rights. Brands and retailers in the U.S. and Europe have zero-tolerance policies for forced labor and are subject to anti-slavery legal requirements that prevent them from sourcing in Uzbekistan at present, given that more than 100,000 people worked under forced labor conditions in 2019.

In addition, the garment and textile sector is suffering a major downturn due to the pandemic. The Cotton Campaign, together with stakeholders, is working to develop a framework for responsible sourcing that would protect workers' rights and provide a pathway for brands and retailers to source from Uzbekistan by ensuring that labor rights violations can be detected and remediated.

Despite significant steps towards ending systemic forced labor and enacting structural reforms, progress has lagged on empowering civil society, including registering independent NGOs and creating space for workers to organize independently. As part of its roadmap, the Cotton Campaign has called on the government to allow a free and vibrant civil society to develop, which will help promote transparency and accountability—and in turn create a climate for responsible investment. Any system established that could allow for brands and retailers to confidently source cotton from Uzbekistan and create much-needed jobs and economic opportunities for workers in Uzbekistan, will only be effective if the government makes reciprocal commitments to enact reforms and enforce them effectively. These include holding perpetrators of forced labor to account, ensuring transparency in the cluster system, and empowering farmers and workers. They also include allowing independent NGOs and workers' organizations to obtain registration and to operate without interference. Such changes are long overdue and would surely usher in a new chapter of development for Uzbekistan.



List of Terms

Cotton Campaign	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. Uzbek Forum is a member of the Cotton Campaign Steering Committee. See: cottoncampaign.org .
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 also 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 <i>Mahalla</i> 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 ILO considers that the requirement to hire replacement pickers amounts to forced 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 2019, daily rates for replacement pickers ranged from 20,000 to 45,000 (approximately US \$2-4.50) depending on the region and picking pass.
Soums	Uzbek currency. In autumn 2019, US \$1 was approximately 10,000 soums.

Appendix 1: RIWI Corp./Solidarity Center Harvest Survey Methodology

The Solidarity Center and Uzbek Forum partnered with RIWI Corp., a global survey and predictive analytics firm, to conduct the nationwide survey. The three organizations developed the survey methodology jointly, based on a method invented and patented by RIWI Corp. RIWI deployed scientifically rigorous technology by which Web users across Uzbekistan encountered random opt-in surveys when they landed on lapsed or dormant URL Web addresses. This approach, particularly suited to the context of Uzbekistan where civil space is curtailed, delivers large volumes of anonymous opt-in surveys to random Web users browsing online in any geography of interest, enabling the collection of sentiments of the population. The following procedures were followed: survey and message testing systems were used with the capability to reach all Web-enabled devices in the target geographic area, in this case the country of Uzbekistan; RIWI Corp. offered the Solidarity Center data continuously without interruption; survey protocols ensured anonymity and non-retention of digital records; respondents were reached across all devices, browsers and operating systems; and algorithms provided multiple confirmations of geo-location.

All Internet users across Uzbekistan had an equal random probability of inadvertently landing on a web page where the survey was posted, lowering the risk of survey coverage bias and ensuring access to a random cohort of respondents. The primary limitation of this method is that respondents must be using an internet-enabled device. Because of the online nature of the survey process, and the level of internet penetration in Uzbekistan, survey results response levels among younger demographic groups was higher than from older demographic groups, and the majority of respondents were from Tashkent. More information about survey demographics is included in Table 11, page 62.

Proprietary algorithms were used, allowing access to hundreds of thousands of exposures to (non-trademarked) websites rotating in real time through multiple geo-location software algorithms. Respondents were only able to answer the survey or question from a specific IP address once, after which all IP addresses were scrubbed and automatically translated into unique identifiers. Proprietary code ensured that the sample of exposed domains was randomized, 'bot'-free, geo-representative, and quality controlled. No personally identifiable or traceable information regarding actual or potential respondents was collected.

The speed with which potential survey respondents landed on the survey website (which is not a 'pop-up' or a 'pop-under' but a real registered website, such as www.posttcards.com) enabled RIWI data scientists to collect behavioral response data from non-habitual survey respondents, whose answers are rapid, associational, intuitive and honest. This is a distinction from most other online survey data, which is mostly collected from habitual respondents who are self-selected members of a 'panel'. Respondents were not incentivized or rewarded for participation. Further technical specifications of the method, and select studies referencing the security and safeguards relating to the survey technology platform, are summarized on the RIWI Corp. website: <https://riwi.com/>.

Survey Demographics:

The total number of survey respondents was 35,806 persons, of which 3,533 respondents completed the entire survey. The population of *total respondents* broken down by sex, geographical location and age group is presented in the tables below:

Age Distribution

Table 11					
Age Group					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	10,446	29.2	29.2	29.2
	25-34	10,143	28.3	28.3	57.5
	35-44	5,787	16.2	16.2	73.7
	45-54	3,512	9.8	9.8	83.5
	55-64	2,579	7.2	7.2	90.7
	65_and_over	3,336	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	35,803	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.0		
Total		35,806	100.0		

Sex Distribution

Table 12					
Sex					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	24,329	68	68	68
	Female	11,474	32	32	100.0
	Total	35,803	100.0	100.0	

Location Distribution

Table 13
Region

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Andijan	2,163	6.0	6.4	6.4
	Bukhara	91	.3	.3	6.7
	Fergana	324	.9	1.0	7.6
	Jizzakh	175	.5	.5	8.1
	Karakalpakstan	488	1.4	1.4	9.6
	Namangan	256	.7	.8	10.3
	Navoi	216	.6	.6	11.0
	Kashkadarya	10	.0	.0	11.0
	Samarkand	1,139	3.2	3.4	14.3
	Syrdarya	6	.0	.0	14.4
	Surkahnarya	245	.7	.7	15.1
	Tashkent City	2,8475	79.5	84.0	99.1
	Tashkent	263	.7	.8	99.9
	Khorezm	42	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	33,893	94.7	100.0	
Missing		1,913	5.3		
Total		35,806	100.0		

The total number of survey respondents who indicated they had participated in the harvest was 10,430 persons, of which 1,200 respondents completed the entire survey. The population of *harvest participants* broken down by sex, geographical location and age group is presented in the tables below:

Age Distribution

Table 14
Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	3,061	29.3	29.3	29.3
	25-34	3,272	31.4	31.4	60.7
	35-44	1,595	15.3	15.3	76
	45-54	823	7.9	7.9	83.9
	55-64	513	4.9	4.9	88.8
	65_and_over	1,166	11.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	10,430	100.0	100.0	

Sex Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	7,520	72	72	72
	Female	2,910	28	28	100.0
	Total	10,430	100.0	100.0	

Location Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Andijan	753	7.2	7.7	7.7
	Bukhara	36	.3	.4	8.1
	Fergana	82	.8	.8	8.9
	Jizzakh	54	.5	.5	9.4
	Karakalpakstan	142	1.4	1.4	10.8
	Namangan	69	.7	.7	11.5
	Navoi	45	.4	.5	12.0
	Kashkadarya	5	.05	.05	12.0
	Samarkand	386	3.7	3.9	16.0
	Syrdarya	4	.04	.04	16.0
	Surkhondarya	60	.6	.6	16.6
	Tashkent City	8,117	77.8	82.6	99.2
	Tashkent Region	67	.6	.7	99.9
Khorezm	8	.08	.08	100.0	
Total	9,828	87.2	100.0		
Missing		602	5.8		
Total		10,430	100.0		

Appendix 2: RIWI Corp./Solidarity Center Harvest Survey – Impact of two thirds male respondents on findings

As shown in Appendix 1, about two thirds of respondents to the harvest survey are male. The analysis of the harvest survey in this report used unweighted data. The following tables show if and how the results from this analysis were influenced by the dominance of male respondents.

To this end, each table with dependent and independent variables shown in this report is presented again with the same respondents who answered both questions analyzed in that table, but with the independent variable replaced by sex. In case sex had any influence on the dependent variable, statistical thresholds and color codes identical to the ones used in the main report are applied.

Table 17					
Question: What would happen if you refused to pick cotton? (Select all that apply)					
> By: Sex (Replaces: Who recruited you to pick cotton?)					
			Male	Female	Total
I would be fired or get in trouble with my employer/ supervisor	Yes	Count	435	143	578
		% of total	15%	17%	15%
Neighbors would shun me	Yes	Count	253	102	355
		% of total	9%	12%	9%
The Mahalla would cause me problems (deprive me of my benefits, stop my utilities, etc.)	Yes	Count	226	92	318
		% of total	8%	11%	8%
I would have to pay a fine (to employer or local authority)	Yes	Count	245	100	345
		% of total	8%	12%	9%
Other consequences	Yes	Count	400	118	518
		% of total	14%	14%	14%
No consequences	Yes	Count	1792	469	2261
		% of total	61%	55%	60%
n = 3,785			3,351	1,024	4,375
Color Key:					
	Result of refusal much less likely for this sex	Result of refusal less likely for this sex	No relationship between this sex and this result of refusal	Result of refusal more likely for this sex	Result of refusal much more likely for this sex
Statistically significant relationship: $P(.0000 <<< .05)$	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

Of the 3,785 respondents who answered the question on the consequences of refusal to pick cotton and the question on who recruited them for the cotton harvest, males were less likely than females to suffer negative consequences. In other words, using unweighted results with two-thirds male respondents is a very conservative approach and underestimates the prevalence of negative consequences.

Table 18					
Question: What were the conditions of work like in the cotton harvest? (Select all that apply)					
> By: Sex (Replaces: Who recruited you to pick cotton?)					
			Male	Female	Total
Quality of food was poor/quantity was insufficient	Yes	Count	175	60	235
		% of total	9%	12%	10%
Insufficient access to clean water	Yes	Count	196	57	253
		% of total	11%	12%	11%
No access to hygiene facilities	Yes	Count	156	47	203
		% of total	8%	10%	9%
Living conditions were substandard	Yes	Count	164	39	203
		% of total	9%	8%	9%
We were made to work long hours	Yes	Count	108	44	152
		% of total	6%	9%	7%
People shouted at or were insulting to workers	Yes	Count	90	28	118
		% of total	5%	6%	5%
People beat or hit workers	Yes	Count	78	34	112
		% of total	4%	7%	5%
Didn't get paid properly (e.g. on time, correct amount)	Yes	Count	107	43	150
		% of total	6%	9%	6%
Conditions were fine (no complaints)	Yes	Count	1296	278	1,574
		% of total	70%	58%	68%
n = 2,325			2,370	630	3,000
Color Key:	Working condition much less likely for this profession	Working condition less likely for this profession	No relationship between this sex and this working condition	Working condition more likely for this sex	Working condition much more likely for this sex
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

Of the 2,325 respondents who answered the question on working conditions during the cotton harvest and the question on who recruited them for the cotton harvest, males were less likely than females to encounter negative working conditions. In other words, using unweighted results with two thirds male respondents is a very conservative approach and underestimates the prevalence of negative working conditions.

Table 19					
Question: Which of these statements apply to you regarding the recent cotton harvest? (Select all that apply)					
> By: Sex (Replaces: Who recruited you to pick cotton?)					
			Male	Female	Total
I was told to tell inspectors something untrue (e.g. about my profession, voluntary participation or work conditions)	Yes	Count	73	15	88
		% of total	5%	5%	5%
I was forced to sign a form saying my participation in the harvest was voluntary	Yes	Count	88	30	118
		% of total	6%	9%	7%
Costs for participating in the harvest (e.g. food or transportation costs) were deducted from my earnings	Yes	Count	62	18	80
		% of total	5%	6%	5%
			(1,287)	(312)	(1,599)*
* In this question on coercion and abuse respondents could choose multiple answer options. This table only displays three of them, which all together represent 286 responses. The 1,599 responses summarize the answer options not displayed in this table.					
n = 1,676	TOTAL		1,510	375	1,885
Color Key:	Much less likely for this sex	Less likely for this sex	No relationship with this sex	More likely for this sex	Much more likely for this sex
Statistically significant relationship: $P(.0000 <<< .05)$	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 ≤ standardized residual ≤ +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

For the 1,676 respondents who answered the question on other forms of coercion or abuse and the question on who recruited them for the cotton harvest, differences between males and females in regard to coercion and abuse are negligible.

Table 20					
Question: Could you refuse to pick cotton?					
> By: Sex (Replaces: Who recruited you to pick cotton?)					
		Male	Female	Total	
Yes	Count	2,210	836	3,046	
	% of total	50%	57%	52%	
No	Count	2,213	628	2,841	
	% of total	50%	43%	48%	
n = 5,887		TOTAL	4,423	1,464	5,887
Color Key:	Much less likely for this sex	Less likely for this sex	No relationship with this sex	More likely for this sex	Much more likely for this sex
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

Of the 5,887 respondents who answered the question on their ability to refuse participation in the cotton harvest and the question on who recruited them for the cotton harvest, males were less likely than females to think that they could have refused. In other words, using unweighted results from two thirds male respondents overestimates the number of people who felt unfree to choose. As mentioned before, this report does not see a negative reply to this question as the best indicator for forced labor, since consequences are not mentioned. The most important result from this question is that employment agencies are more likely to create a feeling of having a choice. Looking at respondents who were recruited by employment agencies shows that both sexes feel equally at liberty to refuse picking cotton (68%), so the two thirds male respondents have no effect here.

Table 21					
Question: What would happen if you refused to pick cotton? (Select all that apply)					
> By: Sex (Replaces: Profession)					
			Male	Female	Total
I would be fired or get in trouble with my employer/supervisor	Yes	Count	143	32	175
		% of total	15%	17%	
I would have to pay a fine (to employer or regional authority)	Yes	Count	63	26	89
		% of total	8%	12%	
Nothing, no consequences	Yes	Count	867	175	1,042
		% of total	61%	55%	
			(252)	(67)	(319)*
n = 1,438	TOTAL		1,325	300	1,625
* In the question on the consequences of a refusal to pick cotton, respondents could choose multiple answer options. This table only displays three of them, including no consequences, which all together represent 1,306 responses. Answer options not listed in this table were not significantly correlated to profession. The 319 responses summarize these answer options.					
Color Key:	Result of refusal much less likely for this sex	Result of refusal less likely for this sex	No relationship between this sex and this result of refusal	Result of refusal more likely for this sex	Result of refusal much more likely for this sex
Statistically significant relationship: P(.0000<<<.05)	Percentage much lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -3.0)	Lower than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual < -2.5)	As expected if the null hypothesis was true (-2.5 <= standardized residual <= +2.5)	Higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +2.5)	Much higher than expected if the null hypothesis was true (standardized residual > +3.0)

Of the 1,438 respondents who answered the question on the consequences of a refusal to pick cotton and the question on their profession, males were less likely than females to pay fines. In other words, this analysis confirms once again that using unweighted results is a very conservative approach and underestimates the prevalence of negative consequences.



Appendix 3: Messages on Pakhtagram

Uzbek Forum collaborated with Radio Ozodlik, the Uzbek-language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which has a sizeable audience in the most remote areas of Uzbekistan. Since 2015 Ozodlik has hosted a Telegram channel, Pakhtagram (Cottongram), from the beginning of the cotton season each year where users can post messages about their experiences in the cotton harvest. A selection of the messages is published on Ozodlik's website.

<p>August 27, 2019 Tashkent city, Higher Military Customs Institute</p>	<p>Every year from mid-September to the end of November we collect cotton. After Mirziyoyev came to power and removed the burden of picking cotton from many people, our burden increased. Last year, we didn't come back from the fields until November 28.</p> <p>We were again told to be ready for departure from September. They will again shorten our lectures and demand we finish the semester without actual training. When the order came, we asked why we were being sent to the fields if Mirziyoyev freed students from the duty to pick cotton but they told us: "This does not apply to you." They said that this year we should not wear our uniform so that we would not look different from the ordinary population. But we are future officers. We also want to receive a full education. Last year, after returning from the fields, at least 30 cadets were treated in a military hospital. Everyone had the same diagnosis - a cold, cough, bronchitis. We, the cadets, ask you to tell the President that we also want to be freed from the duty to pick cotton. Write about us so that the president can hear us.</p>
<p>September 6, 2019 Jizzakh region, Sharaf Rashidov district</p>	<p>I work in a cemetery, which belongs to the district urban improvement office. They said that civil servants would not pick cotton this year. But today the director of our department held a meeting and said that the caretakers of all cemeteries should pick cotton every day.</p>
<p>September 10, 2019 Andijan region, Khanabad city</p>	<p>I am writing to tell you that the presidential decree is not being implemented. Each mahalla must find 150 "voluntary" cotton pickers. This list (the list is available) also includes employees of various organizations, teachers of kindergartens and hospitals. The regional hokim says that we should not involve employees of organizations and at the same time, tells us to find 150 "voluntary" pickers. He does not care how we are supposed to find them. If I can't find pickers, he threatens to fire me.</p>
<p>September 13, 2019 Andijan city</p>	<p>We are electricity workers. We were told to pick cotton for 15 days or to pay 500,000 soum to hire a picker. Our salary is 1 million soum per month. Who should we complain to?</p>
<p>September 13, 2019 Nukus city Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>We are employees of the Ministry of Economy. At the meeting we were told that as of tomorrow we must go to pick cotton in the Karauzyak district (Karakalpakstan). They also said that there wouldn't be a bus, so we have to drive there ourselves or organize transport.</p>

September 13, 2019 Namangan city	We are writing from the city of Namangan. People from the mahalla committee came to our apartment and told us that we need to pay 30,000 soum a day to hire a picker. It is illegal, isn't it?
September 13, 2019 Navoi City	We are employees of the fire service. Every year we are forced to pick cotton for 2 months in the Jizzakh region. The quota is 100 kg per day. This week they said we should get ready to leave again.
September 14, 2019 Andijan region, Ulugnor district	I am a director of the district cultural center. The pickers arrived yesterday and the hokim forced them to stay in our center. They sleep in the hall, on the stage, even in the coal bunker. Look at the conditions. The floor is made of concrete. They will fall ill. They sleep on the floor and there was no disinfection.
September 14, 2019 Syrdarya region, Gulistan city	I work in the main department of the economy of the region. The cotton harvest has begun recently. About two weeks ago, our leader gathered all the employees of the regional and district departments and said that each employee should hire 2 pickers or hand over 2 million soum. On September 5, we received our salaries and handed over half of the amount, 1 million soum each. The remaining 1 million soum should be handed over after October 15, when we get the full salary. Our monthly salary is 1 million 800 thousand soum. I am left with no means to support my family.
September 15, 2019 Ferghana region, Kushtepa district	We live in the Kuvurboshi mahalla. Our sufferings started again with the cotton harvest. The mahalla leaders, go door-to-door and force residents to go pick cotton. They say that the hokim gave an order to send one picker from each house or to pay to hire a picker.
September 16, 2019 Khorezm region, Shavat district	Since September 16, all district organizations have been tasked with sending workers in shifts to pick cotton. This is mandatory. We said that we read the law, which says that it is forbidden to force people, and the district hokim, Hakimboy Otakhanov, says that anyone who doesn't want to participate can resign now and says that he himself will answer to the President.
September 18, 2019 Tashkent city	Today, the cadets of the Academy of the Armed Forces, the Academy of Internal Affairs and the Institute of the National Guard were sent to pick cotton.
September 20, 2019 Tashkent region, Angren	The deputy hokim of the city of Angren requires us, the chairmen of the mahallas, to find pickers. All mahalla chairmen and their deputies go door-to-door all day long and look for cotton pickers. People do not want to do it. Each mahalla received a quota to deliver 600 kg of cotton per day.
September 21, 2019 Tashkent city	At the Aktepa construction market, they are raising money for cotton. They collect 1 million 600 thousand per person. It is 160 dollars!
September 21, 2019 Karakalpakstan, Turtkul district	The head of the Pension Fund of the Turtkul District held a meeting on Monday morning where he verbally abused his subordinates and ordered everyone to give 25,000 soum a day, or go to the fields. We must give 25,000 soum for 40 days. This is 1 million soum. How are we supposed to find this money?
September 24, 2019	We are entrepreneurs. Tax inspectors go from one store to another

Surkhandarya region, Boysun district	and tell us to give them the money [to pick cotton]. Yesterday, employees of Halkbank [People's Bank] left for Sherabat [to pick cotton].
September 25, 2019 Surkhandarya	The hokim of Boysun district and the prosecutor have been forcing residents of the region to pick cotton for 4 days now. Every day 4 buses with pickers are required to pick cotton in the Sherabad and Kizirik districts. All district organizations and mahallas received an order to send their employees to cotton fields.
September 25, 2019 Surkhandarya, Denov	We work in the dekhkan vegetable market. Our tax authorities began to collect money from vendors.
September 25, 2019 Surkhandarya, Angor district	We write on behalf of the vendors of the main market "Angarsk shopping complex." The <i>Bazarkom</i> [head of the market] and his assistants come to the vendors every day and tell them to send a mardikor [trans. – daily workers] or pay 40,000 soum a day so that they can hire a picker. They say that if you don't give the money, then you have to close the store and collect cotton yourself. Some began to object and an electrician was sent to turn off the electricity in the store.
September 25, 2019 Surkhandarya	Tax inspectors are collecting money from Muzrabot district entrepreneurs. They say this is the order of the hokim and everyone should go to pick cotton or give 35,000 a day.
September 25, 2019 Bukhara region, Bukhara city	The Department of Culture and the Uzbek Concert of Bukhara region sent all male singers, musicians and accompanists to pick cotton. Those who have money, hire mardikors [replacement pickers].
September 25, 2019 Tashkent city	Our leader of DUK "Suvokova" [trans. – water supply company] ordered the accounting department to make a list for us to sign to say we received 500,000 soum. Each of the 120 employees has to sign it. Forced fundraising is handled by the head of our trade union. We also have to go to the fields on weekends. Our leader said that those who do not want to comply with these requirements can resign now.
September 25, 2019 Tashkent region, Buka district / Angren	Today in Buka there was a large meeting of mahalla chairmen held by the hokim of the Tashkent region, Kholmatov. He scolded the Buka district hokim and told him to dismiss mahalla chairmen who are in the bottom five of the cotton delivery reports. The hokim of the Tashkent region began to insult the hokim of the city of Angren, calling him a homosexual. Our city of Angren was supposed to provide 5,000 pickers, but could find only 2,500. Kholmatov shouted at the Angren prosecutor and threatened to fire him for ostensibly not doing his job. No one asked him if it is really our job to force residents to pick cotton? These hokims are hypocrites. They give interviews on the Internet saying that no one should be forced to pick cotton, but in fact, they themselves force people to do it. In the end, the hokim of the Tashkent region ordered all mahalla chairmen to find one picker from each house. Everyone is in shock. How can they force so many people? The regional hokim also threatened to

	turn off power in houses where people refuse to go to the fields or not to give out gas bottles.
September 26, 2019 Bukhara region	We, fire safety workers of the Bukhara region, are being forced to pick cotton. We usually work in three shifts. Now one shift has left for cotton and there were only two shifts left (12 hours each). This is a burden for us. Honestly, we are afraid to write our names down, but please help us.
September 26, 2019 Khorezm, Shavat district	I have been a mahalla chairman in the Shavat district for 12 years. This year they told us not to force employees of organizations to pick cotton. But our hokim demands that each house provides one picker. However, some houses have no unemployed. We have 490 houses in the mahalla and they require me to find 490 pickers. Every night, there are meetings about plans and quotas.
September 27, 2019 Navoi city	Employees the regional Veterinary Department of the city of Navoi are told to go to pick cotton from October 1. The order came from the hokimiyat to all district organizations.
September 27, 2019 Fergana city	We are employees of the Ferghana Nitrogen Plant. Since September 27, we are forcibly sent to cotton.
September 28, 2019 Andijan city	The head of the fire department, Jasurbek Karimov, ordered 100 workers be sent to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region even though they said that employees of state organizations would not be forced to the fields.
September 28, 2019 Namangan region, Chust district	We are workers at the Chust district oil depot. We were forced to pay 200,000 soum for cotton harvesting. Our entire salary is only 900,000 soum.
September 28, 2019 Syrdarya region, Gulistan	In the Syrdarya region, employees of state organizations are being forced to pick cotton. The departure point is Istirohat Square in the city of Gulistan. This is the 20th squad. There is no rest on weekends. 100% of all workers must go to pick cotton. We are sent to the poorest fields of the Bek Cluster.
September 28, 2019 Surkhandarya region, Shurtan district	We are doing an internship at the Shurtan Gas Kimyo [trans. – gas chemical complex] factory. From tomorrow we were told to go to Jizzakh to pick cotton. We were supposed to receive our job training at the factory, not to pick cotton.
September 29, 2019 Namangan region, Turakurgan district	All government organizations in our area are forcing workers to pick cotton. The order was given personally by the district hokim. We cannot do our own work. People are not happy with this and complain. We work in the district electric company.
September 29, 2019 Namangan city	We write on behalf of the Sardoba market vendors in Namangan. The market administration collects 800,000 soum from each store to hire cotton pickers.
September 30, 2019 Surkhandarya region, Mubarek district	Mubarekneftegaz [trans. – oil and gas company] employees were told to pick cotton starting today. The order says that those who do not go must pay. An employee of the enterprise was sent to pick cotton in the Jizzakh region. They threaten everyone with redundancies. We asked if there are guarantees to keep our jobs if we go to pick cotton, but they would not tell us.

September 30, 2019 Namangan city	In the summer, my nephew got a job as a assistant prevention inspector. He has one day off, on Sundays. The salary is max. 1 million soum per month. Now he was sent to pick cotton in the Pap district, Navbahor. It's a steppe region and the cotton is very low-growing; no one will go to pick it voluntarily. They also have to pay 10,000 soum per day for food.
September 30, 2019 Tashkent city	From October 1, teachers and employees of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are required to leave for cotton picking in the Arnasai district of the Jizzakh region. It is mandatory. <i>(The next letter is dated October)</i> : They pay locals 1,200 soum each and pay themselves 800 soum each. The cotton quota is 70 kg. They will not be able to fulfill it themselves. They live in Arnasay school and college. Write about it - maybe they will be recalled.
October 2, 2019 Jizzakh region	I have a garden farm. The hokimiyat requires to send 3 pickers every day. This costs me 6 million soum. Yesterday, they also told us to send pickers from among market vendors. The latter refused and the tax inspector said: "We will talk later," and left. I don't even know who to complain to? I am already in a difficult financial situation and now I have to incur such expenses.
October 3, 2019 Ferghana city	We are writing from the Ferghana College of Oil and Gas. Today we were told to hand over 500,000 soum for cotton. We don't even know who to complain to.
October 3, 2019 Tashkent city	We are from the National Guard Department. We are being forcibly sent to the districts of the Samarkand region to pick cotton.
October 4, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Koson district	District organizations are forcing their employees to pick cotton. They say that the employees should not do it themselves but send a picker instead. A picker cost 40,000 a day. They said that one employee should work at least 15 days and whoever does not want to should quit. Audio recording attached: A male voice belonging to the head of the organization says: "Help, this is necessary for our team. We are all in the same boat. It is only for 15 days. The first group should leave tomorrow, the rest should be getting ready. Ask your relatives, sisters, nephews to pick cotton for you. At the end of the day, you are not being sent to war. Let's find a way out of the situation together, figure out how to help the team. The deputy hokim says, if you can't deliver, quit. If you were at those meetings, you would not have survived such curses."
October 5, 2019 Jizzakh region, Zarbdor district	We forestry workers are being forcibly sent to pick cotton in the Zarbdar district of the Jizzakh region. We had to write a statement that we work voluntarily. If anyone asks, we must say that we are picking cotton voluntarily. Everyone is afraid of losing their jobs.
October 6, 2019 Tashkent region, Urta Chirchik district	We are employees of the district department of urban improvement. We are being forced to pick cotton. Of course, it is the order of the hokim. We have no day off. We have to pick cotton on weekends as well. They tell us to buy cotton if we can't collect it. Our boss says that he is scolded by the hokim and drives us to cotton fields.

October 6, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Karshi district	We write to you from the regional polyclinic. Three medical assistants from the intensive care unit were sent to pick cotton. The order was given by the deputy chief physician.
October 6, 2019 Samarkand region, Urgut district	Our hokim demanded that farmers hire 2 cotton pickers per day or pay 60,000 soum each. He yells at farmers if we don't hire pickers. Every day I send two mardikors. It is the same situation in the Toylock district.
October 6, 2019 Syrdarya region,	Veterinary workers are forcibly being sent to pick cotton in Jizzakh.
October 7, 2019 Khorezm region	I paid 4 .56 million soum for military training. And now we were all being sent to pick cotton. All the soldiers are exhausted. We do not want to pick cotton.
October 7, 2019 Tashkent region, Almalyk	I work as a prevention inspector assistant. They forced me and my colleagues to pick cotton. Prevention inspectors in all areas of the Tashkent region were sent to pick cotton. The mahalla cannot recruit enough people and the hokim of the city yells at mahalla chairmen. But where can they find people if no one wants to pick cotton? We were told that the cluster itself will plant and pick cotton.
October 7, 2019 Tashkent region, Bekabad	We, the employees of the gas/oil station in the city of Bekabad were sent to pick cotton in the Bekabad district. On September 21, our director held a meeting and said that we must pick cotton or hire a mardikor [trans. – daily workers] or quit. Many hired mardikors for 30,000 soum a day.
October 7, 2019 Namangan region, Turakurgan district	Employees of organizations are hiring cotton pickers at their own expense. This is the order of the hokim. Approximately half of the workers leave for cotton, and the other half remain at work but pay for mardikors [trans. – daily workers]. I work in the land and cadastre department. The hokim of the district held a meeting on September 25 and ordered the directors of the organizations to send pickers based on the number of staff. I hire a picker for 30,000 soum a day.
October 7, 2019 Namangan city	I work at Namangan Donmahsulotlari JSC. We were forcibly sent to pick cotton. Our leader demands that men pick cotton themselves and women give 40,000 soum a day to pay for mardikor [trans. – daily workers]. On weekends, all workers have to pick cotton.
October 8, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Shakhrisabz	We work at the Yoshlar Kelajagi Foundation (Youth Future). The district and city departments of the foundation sent us to pick cotton in the Karshi district, Batosh mahalla. Many employees said that they did not know how to pick cotton well, then we were told to raise money. We thought that this will be the end of our problems with the cotton, but were wrong. Now we are told that to provide more people, some of the workers must go to pick cotton.
October 9, 2019 Tashkent city	We are policemen. When will we be free from forced cotton picking? Why is there a lot of fuss if teachers or doctors are taken to the cotton fields but when they force us, nobody says anything? We too are people! From October 10, tomorrow, 150 traffic police officers are being sent to pick cotton.
October 9, 2019	The regional center for children “Barkamol Avlod”, which belongs to

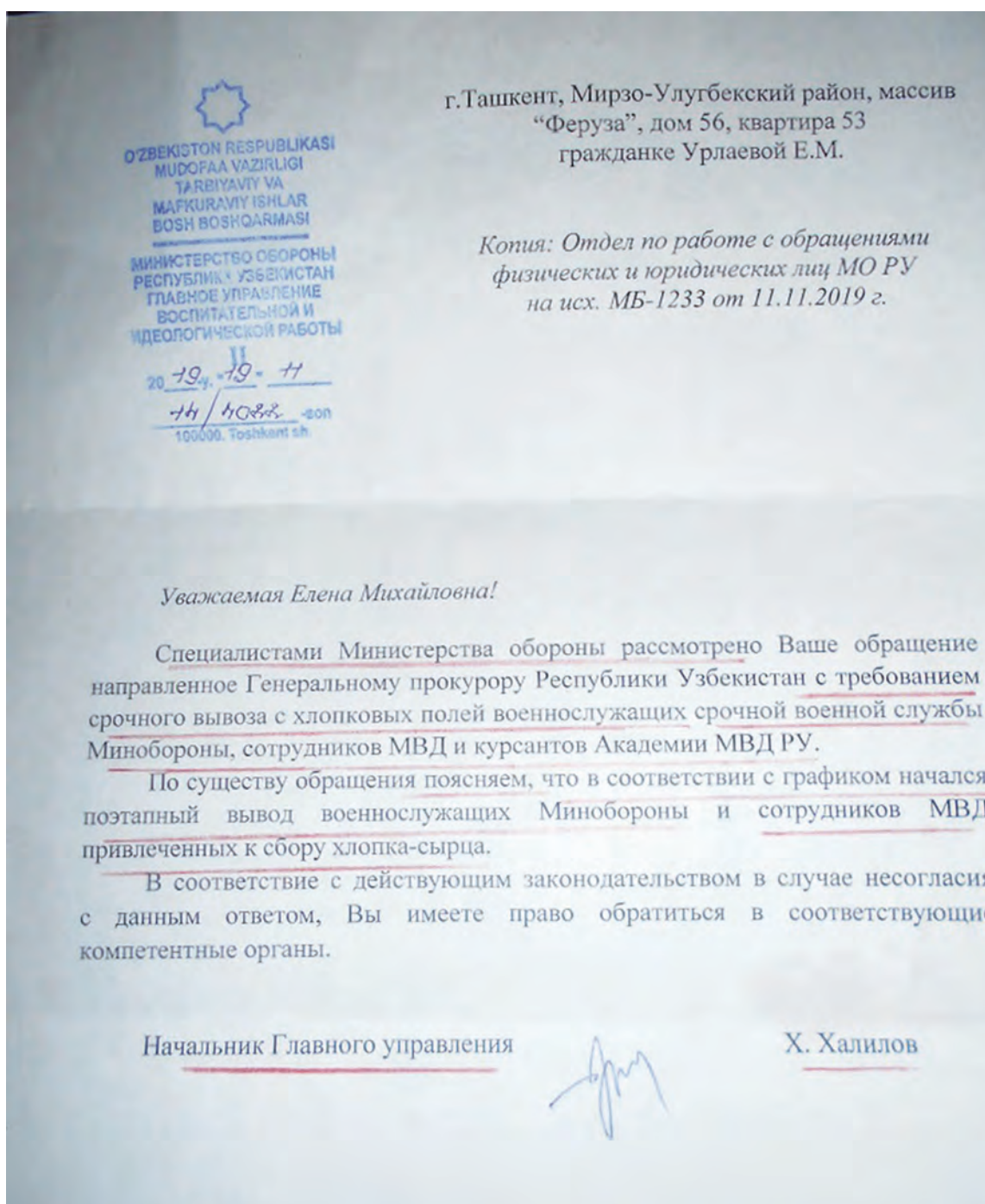
Namangan city	the district department of public education, is sending all workers and teachers to pick cotton. Our director said at the meeting that she received the order from the department. We are also teachers - why aren't we exempted from cotton duty?
October 9, 2019 Navoi region, Kiziltepa district	The district hokim of Kiziltepa, Shabon Nabiev, is forcing the workers of the district hospital to pick cotton. They already have low salaries, since 40% of the salary is kept for utility bills.
October 10, 2019 Tashkent region, Almalyk	Copy of a statement on voluntary participation in cotton picking sent by a worker of the Almalyk Mining and Metallurgical plant. "The workers of the plant are afraid of losing their jobs, so they sign these statements and go to pick cotton."
October 10, 2019 Namangan region, Pop District	Soldiers are being forced to pick cotton in the Pop district of the Gurumsoroy village. They were told not to wear military uniforms.
October 11, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Kitab District	I work at a school as a youth employee with a salary of 776,000 soum, barely enough for a family. The chairman of the Youth Union of our region demands that we find a cotton picker or hand in 400,000 soum. He scolds me for not giving the money. I don't have any money at all. I do not know what to do.
October 12, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Shakhrisabz	The chief physician of the city health department forces workers to pick cotton or hire mardikors [trans. – daily workers].
October 12, 2019 Samarkand region, Pahtachi district	We work in the kindergarten No.26. Our manager is forcing us to pick cotton. She says that those who don't want to comply with this requirement, can resign. We have to pick cotton to keep our jobs.
October 14, 2019 Bukhara city	We are employees of the Central Bank of the Bukhara region. Our manager demands that we give 50,000 soum per day for hiring mardikors [trans. – daily workers] to pick cotton. No one dares to refuse.
October 15, 2019 Bukhara region, Shofikon district	Raygaz [trans. – district gas supply company] workers are being forced to pick cotton.
October 16, 2019 Samarkand city	Police officers forced mardikors [trans. – daily workers] that work in the central market to go to the fields.
October 16, 2019 Kashkadarya region, Shakhrisabz district	Entrepreneurs are being forced to pay money for cotton. At the meeting, they said that entrepreneurs should find a total of 4,000 pickers. Each mardikor [trans. – daily workers] should collect 70 kg per day. If the quota is not met, then the tax inspectorate will fine the entrepreneur who hired this mardikor [trans. – daily workers]. Furthermore, the hokim demanded that entrepreneurs buy valuable gifts for pickers: 50 refrigerators, washing machines.
October 17, 2019 Karakalpakstan, Khuzhaili	There are 42 schools in Hujaili. The district hokim, and his deputy called the school directors to the department of public education and told them to send at least 15 people per school to pick cotton. Otherwise, he said he will send a commission that will find violations and fire the director. Today, on October 17, the deputy hokim called

	school directors to his office one by one. To conceal the participation of schools in the reports, the unit number is recorded in the bulletins instead of the school number.
October 18, 2019 Jizzakh region, Pakhtakor	Government organizations in the Pakhtakor district are forcing employees to covertly pick cotton. An inspection from the Ministry of Labor came a week ago and fined the management of the Halkbank and the Pension Fund. But nothing changed.
October 18, 2019 Karakalpakstan, Khuzhaili	District hospital staff are being forced to collect cotton. They were also forced to write a statement that they go to pick cotton voluntarily in order to earn extra money for the family.
October 19, 2019 Nukus	Tomorrow, on October 20, each school in the city of Nukus should send 10 people each to pick cotton. Today, some people already left to pick cotton.
October 19, 2019 Namangan region, Noreen	I work in a kindergarten. Every Saturday and Sunday we are forced to pick cotton. All kindergarten workers go to the fields. And in remote villages, kindergarten employees are forced to pick cotton every day.
October 22, 2019 Jizzakh city	We are cash transport employees. We are forced to pay money for cotton. It would be better if we went to the fields ourselves rather than giving our salary away.
October 22, 2019 Andijan region, Ulugnor	We work for Vodkhoz [trans. – water supply company]. We have been collecting cotton for 1.5 months in Mingbulok village. We live in a children's camp. The conditions here are just terrible. We keep picking cotton although the region has already fulfilled the quota.
October 28, 2019 Bukhara region, Romitan district	We write on behalf of 60 employees of the Regional Road Construction Organization. We still have not been paid a salary because we were paid for picking cotton. We were forced to pick cotton; it wasn't our decision. And now they do not want to pay our salaries, because we were not at work.
October 29, 2019 Andijan region, Kurgantepa district	There is no cotton left but the hokim convenes meetings every evening at 7 pm and demands that the pickers be brought to the fields anyway. He insults the mahalla chairmen.
October 29, 2019 Tashkent region, Akhangaran	Prisoners of open prison No. 48 were sent to pick cotton. A prisoner's wife writes that the "master" beats her husband because he cannot collect 80 kg of cotton per day.
October 30, 2019 Tashkent city	We are cadets of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We are exhausted from picking cotton.
October 30, 2019 Namangan region, Uchkurgan district	From October 19, employees from the Vatanparvar Center (Patriot) [trans. – paramilitary organization] were sent to pick cotton in the Uchkurgan district.
November 1, 2019 Tashkent region, Pskent	Despite the fact that the district has fulfilled the quota, they continue to force us to pick cotton. The head of the regional Farmers' Council, Tulkin Turaev, and the deputy regional hokim named Anvar, is forcing the department of urban improvement, banks and other organizations to send their employees to the fields. It doesn't matter whether it rains and the ground becomes mud, you have to work.

November 3, 2019 Namangan region, Chartak district	From today, by order of the department of public education, teachers and school workers of the Chartak region are being sent to pick cotton. I know that if you write about us, the commission will arrive tomorrow. But I also know what will happen. I can tell you in advance; they will say: "Nobody forced the teachers to pick cotton - it was their own initiative because they are free during the school holidays."
November 4, 2019 Samarkand city	We work in the Fire Department of the Samarkand region. We are picking cotton in Pakhtakor district of Jizzakh region. We are given food, which is so bad that even dogs would not eat it, but they take 22,000 soum per day for it. If we complain, they threaten to fire us.
November 5, 2019 Navoi region, Karmana district	We are teachers from Navoi. Now there are school holidays (from November 3-11), the headmaster sent us to pick cotton. She said, either go and pick cotton yourself or pay 35,000 soum for a picker. The director says that this is an instruction from the public education department and that it is useless to complain. It has got cold and each of us has 2-3 children left alone at home.
November 7, 2019 Samarkand region, Kattakurgan district	During the school holidays, teachers from our area were sent to pick cotton.
November 8, 2019 Karakalpakstan, Hujayli	District organizations sent their employees to pick cotton for a week. At 7 am today, they were taken to the fields by bus from the hokimiyat.
November 23, 2019 Bukhara region	Uzbektelecom employees from 5 technical departments are being forced to pick cotton. The head (of the department) said that if someone does not agree, they can quit.

Appendix 4: A letter to the human rights activist Elena Urlaeva signed by H. Khalilov, the head of the main department of educational and ideological work of the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan.

Specialists of the Ministry of Defense considered your appeal addressed to the Prosecutor General of Uzbekistan demanding urgent removal of military personnel of the military service of the Ministry of Defense, employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and cadets of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from cotton fields. On the merits of the appeal, we state that, in accordance with the schedule, a phased withdrawal of the military personnel of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs officers involved in the collection of cotton has begun. Signature, November 19, 2019.



Appendix 5: Order by the Republic of Uzbekistan Ministry of Emergency Situations

Addendum
to Republic of Uzbekistan Ministry of Emergency
Situations order no. 492 of 27 September 2019

DISTRIBUTION of territorial administrations and constituent bodies of the ministry summoned to the cotton harvest in Jizzakh Province

Name of division	No. of personnel summoned	Name of division	No. of personnel summoned
Andijon Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Andijon Province Fire Safety Department	90
Bukhara Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Bukhara Province Fire Safety Department	90
Jizzakh Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Jizzakh Province Fire Safety Department	70
Qashqadaryo Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Qashqadaryo Province Fire Safety Department	120
Samarqand Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Samarqand Province Fire Safety Department	90
Sirdaryo Province Department of Emergency Situations	10	Sirdaryo Province Fire Safety Department	70
Navoiy Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Navoiy Province Fire Safety Department	70
Namangan Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Namangan Province Fire Safety Department	80
Farg'ona Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Farg'ona Province Fire Safety Department	92
Tashkent Province Department of Emergency Situations	11	Tashkent Province Fire Safety Department	120
Tashkent City Department of Emergency Situations	11	Tashkent City Fire Safety Department	120
Civil Defence Institute	28	RIO	35
Qamchiq MQQB	20	XBT and MOM (Samarqand)	20
National Rapid Response Centre	25	NKMK DK Fire Safety Department	120
LUOK MChZh Fire Safety Department	30	Fire Safety Institute	690

Total: 2100 people



492 – сонин

2019 йил 27 сентябрь

Тошкент шаҳри

Ўзбекистон Республикаси Фавқулодда вазиятлар вазирлиги шахсий таркибини Жиззах вилоятига пахта йиғим-теримига жалб қилиш тўғрисида

Жиззах вилоятида пахта кўп етиштирилиши, унв сифати ва ўз вақтида йиғинтириб олиш бўйича қатта ҳажмдаги ишлар олиб борилишини ҳамда пахта ҳосилини ўз вақтида ҳосил қилмасдан йиғиб-териб олиш мақсадида Жиззах вилояти ҳокимининг 2019 йил 26 сентябрдаги 01-1782-сонли амалий ёрдам олиш тўғрисидаги мурожаати асосида ўтказилган Ўзбекистон Республикаси Фавқулодда вазиятлар вазирлиги ҳаёбатининг 2019 йил 26 сентябрдаги йиғини қарориди белгиланган вазифаларни ўз вақтида ва сифатли бажариш мақсадида,

БУЮРАМА:

1. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Фавқулодда вазиятлар вазирлигининг 2019 йил 26 сентябрь кундаги ҳайбат йиғилиши баёни вазирлик тизимида раҳбарлик ва ижро учун қабул қилинсин.
2. Жиззах вилоятига пахта йиғим-теримига жалб этиладиган вазирликнинг худудий бошқармалари ва таркибий тузилмаларининг шахсий таркиби тақсимоти иловага мувофиқ тасдиқлансин.
3. Жиззах вилоятидаги пахта йиғим-теримига масъул этиб Ташкент шаҳарлик бошқармаси бошлиғи полковник В.Ашерматов, ЁХББ РИО командири полковник И.Шарипов, ЁХИ бошлиғи ўринбосари полковник Ч.Хужанов ва Жиззах вилояти Фавқулодда вазиятлар бошқармаси бошлиғи полковник С.Қудратовлар тайинлансин.
4. Ташкент шаҳарлик бошқармаси бошлиғи полковник В.Ашерматовга:

вазирлик шахсий таркиби пахта теримига жалб этилган туман ҳокимликлари томонидан пахта ҳосили йиғим-теримига тегишли даражада ташкил этиш ва пахта ҳосилининг сифатли қабул қилиш, шунингдек маъсум давонида пахтаи қайта ишлаш қорхоналари, тайёрлов пунктлари, йиғим-терим техникаси, юклаш-транспорт воситаларининг узлуксиз ишлашини таъминлаш юзасидан амалга ошириладиган ишлар мувофиқлаштирилиб борилин;

шахсий таркиб учун яратилган ижтимоий шарт-шароитлар (ётоқхона, ювиниш жойлари, ўчоқхона, овқатланиш жойлари, тиббиёт маскани, кийим-бош

ва оёқ кийим қўриғиш хоналари, ичимлик суви билан таъминлаш, кўмир ва ўтин захиралари, хожатхона ва бошқалар) яратилиши қаттиқ назоратга олинин;

ҳар кун тегишли туман ҳокимлиги томонидан ўтказиладиган пахта штаби йиғилишларида шахсан иштирок этиб, кун давомида теримган пахта миқдори, эришилган ютуқлар, йўл қўйилган қамчиликлар ва келгуси иш кўнги аниқ ва зарурий вазифалар белгиланган борилин;

пахта етиштирувчи фермер ҳўжаликлари Ўзбекистон Республикаси Молия вазирлиги томонидан белгиланган пархлардан келиб чиқиб, шахсий таркиб томонидан топирилган пахта ҳосили миқдори учун уларга ўз вақтида ҳақ тўлашни назоратга олинин;

ҳар кун вазирлик шахсий таркибининг пахта теримига чиқishi, уларнинг сони ва терим жараёни ҳамда автоқорхоналар ва Ички ишлар идоралари билан ҳамкорликда уларни автотранспортларда пахта далаларига олиб борилиши ва қайтарилиши назорат қилинсин;

алоҳида жоббозлик кўрсатаётган ходимларга моддий муқофотлар тақдим қилиниши, шунинг билан бир қаторда пахта йиғим-терим тадбирларида еуст иштирок этаётган ходимларга ишбақари чоралар қўрилиши таъминлансин;

белгиланган туман Соғлиқни сақлаш бўлими ходимлари томонидан шахсий таркиб жойлаштирилган шатақали шаҳарчалар ва бинолар ҳамда уларнинг атрофида меъриий санитар-гигиеник ҳолат таъминланиши, тиббий мақсадларнинг узлуксиз фаолияти, мақсади тиббиёт ходимларининг фаолият кўрсатиши ҳамда зарур бўлган тиббий препаратлар ва медикаментлар билан таъминланиши мувофиқлаштирилсин ва талаб қилинсин;

тегишли туман ҳокимлиги ва тегишли хизматлари билан биргаликда шахсий таркиб жойлаштирилган шатақали шаҳарчаларда ва бинолар атрофида кўчи савдо дўконлари ва расталарнинг фаолият кўрсатиши таъминлансин;

пахта йиғим-терим маъсулида бирктирилган хизмат машиналарининг ҳайдовчилари билан йўриқномалар ўтқаниш, ҳайдовчилар томонидан йўл ҳаракати қоидаларига риоя этиш, хизмат машинасидан тўғри фойдаланиш, ҳар кунги техник ҳолатини текшириш ва техник хизмат кўрсатиш ишлари таъминлансин ва назорат қилинсин;

пахта йиғим-терим жараёни тўғрисида амалга ошириладиган барча тадбирлар юзасидан ҳар кун соат 20.00га қалар вазирлик Фавқулодда вазиятларда бошқарув марказига маълумот тақдим этилиши таъминлансин.

5. Молия-иқтисод бошқармаси (подполковник Д.Усмонов), Ёғин хавфсизлиги бош бошқармаси (полковник С.Зупаров), Ёғин хавфсизлиги институти (полковник Д.Тохтамуродов), худудий ФВБ ва ЁХБ ҳамда таркибий тузилмалари бошлиқлари (командир)ларига:

2019 йилнинг 29 сентябрь кун соат 18:00 га қалар, иловага мувофиқ шахсий таркиб темир йўл транспорти ҳамда йўл ҳаракати хавфсизлиги бошқармасининг маъсум техникаси кузатув остида автобус орқали белгиланган худудга этиб бориши таъминлансин;

пахта йиғим-теримига жалб этилган шахсий таркиб йўл ҳаракати, ёғин ва техника хавфсизлик қоидаларига риоя қилини бўйича йўриқномадан ўтқанилин;

шахсий таркиб фуқаролар билан мулоқотда қасб миданиятига қатъий амал қилиш ва ҳушмуомила бўлиши бўйича алоҳида кўрсатмалар берилин;

шахсий таркибининг зарурий воситалар (носенк кийим-бош, идиш-товуқ, шахсий тигина ва ётоқ воситалари) билан таъминланган ҳолда қатнашини ташкил қилинсин;

2019 йил пахта ҳосили ҳосилини ўз вақтида ва сифатли йиғиб-териб олишга ва уларнинг ўрнига наватчиликка жалб қилинган хизматчи ходимлар учун ортиқча ишлаган қулларини қўшимча дам олиш кунлари билан тиклаш масалалари кўзда тутилсин.

6. Моддий-техник таъминот бошқармаси (подполковник Р.Собиров), Ёғин хавфсизлиги бош бошқармаси (полковник С.Зупаров), Ёғин хавфсизлиги институти (полковник Д.Тохтамуродов) ва ММКБ бошлиғи (полковник Н.Санилов) пахта йиғим-теримига жалб этилган шахсий таркиб учун зарурий жиҳозлар (ётоқ, овқатланиш, дори-лармон, ёқилги-мойлаш маъсулотлари ва х.к.) ва транспорт воситаларини жалб этсин.

7. Молия-иқтисод бошқармаси (подполковник Д.Усмонов), Ёғин хавфсизлиги бош бошқармаси (полковник С.Зупаров), Ёғин хавфсизлиги институти (полковник Д.Тохтамуродов), пахта йиғим-терим тадбирларига жалб этиладиган вазирлик ходимлари хизмат сафари харажатлари билан ўрнатилган тартибда таъминлансин.

8. Қадрлар бошқармаси (полковник С.Югай), Ёғин хавфсизлиги бош бошқармаси (полковник С.Зупаров), Ёғин хавфсизлиги институти (полковник Д.Тохтамуродов), Жиззах вилоятига бириктирилган ходимлар ва теримчиларнинг хизмат сафарига кетишлари ўрнатилган тартибда расмийлаштирилсин.

9. Фавқулодда вазиятларда бошқарув маркази (полковник С.Абдурахмонов), республикамиздаги пахта йиғим-терими тадбирлари бўйича ҳамда Жиззах вилоятидан йиғилган маълумотлар умумлаштирилиб, тахсиллий маълумотлар вазирлик раҳбариятига тақдим этиб борилиши таъминлансин.

10. Вазирлик Матбуот хизмати (катта лейтенант М.Садиқов), пахта йиғим-терими жараёнини ҳамда пахта йиғим-терими маъсулида алоҳида ўрнқ бўлаётган ходимлар фаолияти оммавий ахборот орқали кенг ёритилиши таъминлансин.

11. Ишлар бошқармаси (полковник К.Арипов): буйруқ худудий бошқармалар ва таркибий тузилмаларга "е-хат" тизими орқали юборилсин ва "Гермес" ахборот тизимига жойлаштирилсин;

буйруқ Марказий аппарат шахсий таркибининг тегишли қисмига етказилсин.

12. Маъмур буйруқ талабларининг бажарилишини назорат қилиш Вазирнинг биринчи ўринбосари – Штаб бошлиғи генерал-майор А.Қўлиқовга зиммасига юклатилсин.

Вазир в.б.
генерал-лейтенант

Т.Худайбергенов

Ўзбекистон Республикаси
Фавқулодда вазиятлар вазирлигининг
2019 йил 27 сентябрдаги 492-сонли
буйруғига илова

Жиззах вилоятида пахта йиғим-теримига жалб этиладиган вазирликнинг худудий бошқармалари ва таркибий тузилмалари ТАҚСИМОТИ

Тузилма номи	Жалб этиладиган шўт сони	Тузилма номи	Жалб этиладиган шўт сони
Андижон вилояти ФВБ	11	Андижон вилояти ЁХБ	90
Бухоро вилояти ФВБ	11	Бухоро вилояти ЁХБ	90
Жиззах вилояти ФВБ	11	Жиззах вилояти ЁХБ	70
Қашқадарь вилояти ФВБ	11	Қашқадарь вилояти ЁХБ	120
Самарқанд вилояти ФВБ	11	Самарқанд вилояти ЁХБ	90
Сирдарё вилояти ФВБ	10	Сирдарё вилояти ЁХБ	70
Навоий вилояти ФВБ	11	Навоий вилояти ЁХБ	70
Наманган вилояти ФВБ	11	Наманган вилояти ЁХБ	80
Фарғона вилояти ФВБ	11	Фарғона вилояти ЁХБ	92
Тошкент вилояти ФВБ	11	Тошкент вилояти ЁХБ	120
Тошкент шаҳар ФВБ	11	Тошкент шаҳар ЁХБ	120
Фуқаро муҳофазаси институти	28	РИО	35
"Қамчиқ" МКҚБ	20	ХБТга МОМ (Самарқанд)	20
ТХҚР-ТМ	25	"НКМК" ДК ЁХБ	120
"ЛЮОК" МЧК ЁХБ	30	Ёғин хавфсизлиги институти	690

Жами: 2100 нафар.

Appendix 6: Document on citizens participating in the cotton harvest from mahallas

INFORMATION on citizens participating in the cotton harvest from mahallas as of October 3, 2019

№	Name of <i>mahalla</i> <i>mahalla</i> citizens' gathering (MCG)	Must be present in the harvest	Following participated	Difference	Including			
					Chairman	Assistant	Specialist	Guard
1	"Yuksalish" MCG	201	178	-23	82	57	39	0
2	"Ustalar" MCG	155	119	-36	42	39	38	0
3	"Namuna" MCG	170	134	-36	64	28	42	0
4	"Gulzor" MCG	240	127	-113	58	31	38	0
5	"Bogzor" MCG	262	197	-65	84	57	56	0
6	"Navbahor" MCG	344	224	-120	97	76	51	0
7	"O'zbekiston" MCG	290	199	-91	84	51	64	0
8	"O'zgarish" MCG	201	162	-39	71	49	42	0
9	"Hunarmand" MCG	201	125	-76	45	42	38	0
10	"Bogiston" MCG	184	141	-43	52	37	52	0
11	"Dehqonobod" MCG	165	123	-42	54	36	33	0
12	"Uzumzor" MCG	184	152	-32	61	49	42	0
13	"Ma'naviyat" MCG	283	141	-142	37	58	46	0
14	"Ko'na birlashuv" MCG	151	69	-82	30	18	21	0
15	"Sohibkor" MCG	227	167	-60	103	64	0	0
16	"Qumbodoq" MCG	186	161	-25	86	0	75	0
17	"Oltin qum" MCG	211	175	-36	76	51	48	0
18	"Nurafshon" MCG	503	463	-40	174	141	148	0
19	"Ashxobod" MCG	396	233	-163	98	69	66	0
20	"Gulshan" MCG	239	94	-145	25	34	35	0
21	"Nurli maskan" MCG	197	134	-63	89	45	0	0
22	"Obod" MCG	195	113	-82	65	0	48	0
23	"Oktepa" MCG	206	134	-72	58	34	42	0
24	"Beruniy" MCG	150	105	-45	52	31	22	0
25	"Hurriyat" MCG	150	130	-20	52	31	47	0
26	"Yangi qadam" MCG	352	212	-140	82	53	45	32
27	"Kal'ajikkala" MCG	326	235	-91	92	61	82	0
28	"Galaba" MCG	165	139	-26	54	44	41	0
29	"Oq oltin" MCG	232	205	-27	0	109	96	0
30	"Madaniyat" MCG	239	189	-50	96	93	0	0
31	"Nurli hayot" MCG	246	182	-64	73	54	55	0
32	"Nayman" MCG	302	233	-69	0	117	116	0
33	"Tozabozor" MCG	258	278	20	91	66	75	46
34	"Saxovat" MCG	220	217	-3	75	41	48	53
35	"Navroz" MCG	155	172	17	58	46	41	27
36	"To'pchi" MCG	328	301	-27	122	105	74	0
37	"Qipchoq" MCG	249	272	23	102	83	87	0
38	"Bo'ka" MCG	277	228	-49	95	71	62	0
39	"Mehnat guli" MCG	221	132	-89	53	38	41	0
40	"Qorabog" MCG	166	159	-7	68	43	48	0
41	"Qulongorabog" MCG	201	139	-62	81	58	0	0
42	"Paxtaobod" MCG	213	151	-62	64	42	45	0
43	"Yosh o'smir" MCG	206	132	-74	77	55	0	0
	Total	10047	7576	-2471	3022	2307	2089	158

Маҳаллалар бўйича пахта йиғим теримига қатнашган фуқаролар тўғрисида
2019 йил 03 октябрь ҳолатига бўлган

МА Ё Л У М О Т

№	Маҳалла номи	Теримда қатнашши керак	Шундан қатнашди	Фарқи	Шундан			
					Раис	Котиб	Мутахассис	Посбон
1	"Юксалиш" МФЙ	201	178	-23	82	57	39	0
2	"Усталар" МФЙ	155	119	-36	42	39	38	0
3	"Намуна" МФЙ	170	134	-36	64	28	42	0
4	"Гулзор" МФЙ	240	127	-113	58	31	38	0
5	"Богзор" МФЙ	262	197	-65	84	57	56	0
6	"Навбахор" МФЙ	344	224	-120	97	76	51	0
7	"Ўзбекистон" МФЙ	290	199	-91	84	51	64	0
8	"Ўзгариш" МФЙ	201	162	-39	71	49	42	0
9	"Хунарманд" МФЙ	201	125	-76	45	42	38	0
10	"Богистон" МФЙ	184	141	-43	52	37	52	0
11	"Дехқонобод" МФЙ	165	123	-42	54	36	33	0
12	"Узумзор" ШФЙ	184	152	-32	61	49	42	0
13	"Маънавият" МФЙ	283	141	-142	37	58	46	0
14	"Кўна бирлашув" МФЙ	151	69	-82	30	18	21	0
15	"Сохибкор" МФЙ	227	167	-60	103	64	0	75
16	"Қумбодок" МФЙ	186	161	-25	86	0	48	0
17	"Олтин қум" ШФЙ	211	175	-36	76	51	148	0
18	"Нурафшон" ШФЙ	503	463	-40	174	141	66	0
19	"Ашхабод" МФЙ	396	233	-163	98	69	35	0
20	"Гуллиан" МФЙ	239	94	-145	25	34	0	0
21	"Нурли маскан" МФЙ	197	134	-63	89	45	48	0
22	"Обод" МФЙ	195	113	-82	65	0	42	0
23	"Октепа" МФЙ	206	134	-72	58	34	22	0
24	Беруний МФЙ	150	105	-45	52	31	47	0
25	"Хуррият" МФЙ	150	130	-20	52	31	45	32
26	"Янги қалам" МФЙ	352	212	-140	82	53	82	0
27	"Кальяжиккала" МФЙ	326	235	-91	92	61	41	0
28	"Ғалаба" МФЙ	165	139	-26	54	44	96	0
29	"Ок олтин" МФЙ	232	205	-27	0	109	0	0
30	"Маданият" МФЙ	239	189	-50	96	93	55	0
31	"Нурли ҳаёт" МФЙ	246	182	-64	73	54	116	0
32	"Найман" МФЙ	302	233	-69	0	117	75	46
33	"Толабозор" МФЙ	258	278	20	91	66	48	53
34	"Саховият" МФЙ	220	217	-3	75	41	41	27
35	"Наврўз" МФЙ	155	172	17	58	46	74	0
36	"Тулчи" МФЙ	328	301	-27	122	105	87	0
37	"Кипчок" МФЙ	249	272	23	102	83	62	0
38	"Бука" МФЙ	277	228	-49	95	71	41	0
39	"Меҳнат гули" МФЙ	221	132	-89	53	38	48	0
40	"Қорабоғ" МФЙ	166	159	-7	68	43	0	0
41	"Қулонқорабоғ" МФЙ	201	139	-62	81	58	45	0
42	"Пахтабод" МФЙ	213	151	-62	64	42	0	0
43	"Ёш ўсмир" МФЙ	206	132	-74	77	55	0	0
	Жами	10047	7576	-2471	3022	2307	2089	158

Appendix 7: Telefax notification to *hokims* of districts

Telefax Notification

To the *hokims* of the districts

Daily meetings chaired by the regional *hokim* on the progress of the cotton harvest will be held at 10 p.m. starting from September 26, 2019.

The following persons must be present at night meetings in the conference rooms of districts:

1. The heads of the district's four sectors;
2. Chief representatives from the region attached to the district;
3. The deputies of the districts' *hokims*;
4. Heads of cotton brigades;
5. Chairmen of *mahallas*;
6. Chairmen of machine and tractor parks;
7. Heads of district farmers' councils;
8. Head of the District Employment Department;
9. District technical inspectors;
10. Head of the Department of land resources of the district;
11. Representatives from the district attached to the areas;
12. Heads of commercial banks of the district;
13. Head of the District Department of Agriculture and other organizations related to the issue.

From the conference rooms of the region must be present:

1. Heads of four sectors of the region;
2. Relevant deputies of the regional *hokim*;
3. Chairman of the regional *Mahalla* Fund;
4. Head of the regional Agricultural Inspectorate Department;
5. Director of the cotton terminal limited liability company;
6. Heads of regional farmers' councils;
7. Head of the District Employment Department;
8. Head of the Department of Land Resources of the region;
9. Heads of central and commercial banks of the region;
10. Head of the Regional Department of Agriculture and other organizations related to the issue.

Deputy of the regional *hokim*: (signed, stamp) U.Kurbanov

ТЕЛЕФАКС ХАБАРНОМА № _____

Туманлар ҳоқимларига

2019 йил 26 сентябр кунидан бошлаб ҳар куни соат 22:00 да вилоят ҳоқими бошчилигида пахта йигим-теримнинг бориши масалалари бўйича селектор йиғилиш ўтказилиб борилади.

Селектор йиғилишда туманлар студияларида:

1. Туманнинг 4 та секторлари раҳбарлари
2. Туманга вилоятдан беркитилган бош вакиллар
3. Туман ҳоқимининг ўринбосарлари
4. Пахта йигим-терим отряд раҳбарлари
5. Маҳалла фуқаролар йиғини раислари
6. МТП раислари
7. Туман фермерлар кенгаши раиси
8. Туман Бандлик бўлими бошлиғи
9. Туман техника назорати инспектори
10. Туман Ер ресурслари бўлими бошлиғи
11. Тумандан ҳудудларга беркитилган вакиллар
12. Туман тижорат банклари раҳбарлари
13. Туман қишлоқ хўжалиғи бўлими бошлиғи ва масалага алоқадор тегишли ташкилотлар қатнашишлари топширилади.

Вилоят студиясидан:

1. Вилоят 4 та сектор раҳбарлари
2. Вилоят ҳоқимининг тегишли ўринбосарлари
3. Вилоят маҳалла жамғармаси раиси
4. Вилоят Агроинспекция бошқармаси бошлиғи
5. Пахта терминали МЧЖ директори
6. Вилоят фермерлар кенгаши раиси
7. Вилоят Бандлик бошқармаси бошлиғи
8. Вилоят Ер ресурслари бошқармаси бошлиғи
9. Вилоят марказий ва тижорат банклари бошлиқлари
10. Вилоят қишлоқ хўжалиғи бошлиғи ва масалага алоқадор тегишли ташкилотлар қатнашишлари топширилади.

Вилоят ҳоқимининг
ўринбосари



Ў.Қурбанов

Acknowledgements

Uzbek Forum would like to thank the hundreds of people who shared information and gave interviews about labor issues in the Uzbek cotton harvest and whose experiences are reflected in this report. Deep appreciation also goes to the team of experienced monitors who collected that information, sometimes at personal risk. Without their consistent work to document actual conditions during the harvest, none of the current positive changes would have been possible. Uzbek Forum also extends its gratitude to the Solidarity Center for contributing to this work through the harvest survey conducted with RIWI Corp. Special thanks to Abby McGill, Ia Kakichashvili, Johannes Schaefer, Rudy Porter, and Van Credle of Solidarity Center for their thoughtful data analysis and review of findings.



Endnotes

¹ To test the relationship between the variables captured by the questions of the survey, calculations are made using Pearson's chi-square statistic and the p-value at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ for the hypothesis test of independence of the observed frequencies in the contingency table observed (from un-weighted cross-tabulation). The expected frequencies are computed based on the marginal sums under the assumption of independence. As is common in online surveys, the number of respondents decreased with each question. The total number of respondents for each combination of questions is used for each analysis, which explains variations in respondent totals.

² Uzbek Forum interview with market seller, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 16, 2019.

³ The cluster system, introduced by President Mirziyoyev, consists of vertical integration of cotton growing, processing, spinning, weaving, and production of finished goods by private entities.

⁴ Uzbekistan Cotton Harvest 2019 Chronicle of Forced Labor, Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, November 11, 2019, <https://www.uzbekforum.org/uzbekistan-cotton-harvest-2019-chronicle-of-forced-labor-2/>.

⁵ Uzbek Forum interviews with 17 farmers, Kasbi district, Kashkadarya, November 2019; and 12 farmers in Mirishkor district, Kashkadarya, November 2019.

⁶ Hard to See Harder to Count: Survey Guidelines to Estimate Forced Labour of Adults and Children, International Labor Office, Geneva, 2012, p. 23-24, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182096.pdf.

⁷ De facto, mahalla councils have always been closely controlled by the government. In February 2020, this relationship was made official when the Ministry for Support of Mahallas and Families was formed, assuming jurisdiction over mahalla councils. Since this change went into effect, mahalla councils are now official government bodies instead of nominally independent local self-governance organizations. Each district has established a department for the support of mahallas and families, overseen by a deputy hokim.

⁸ Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 752, On Measures for an Organized Implementation of the Cotton Harvest of 2019, September 9, 2019, <https://lex.uz/docs/4505998>.

⁹ International Labour Organization, "Third-party monitoring of child labour and forced labour during the 2019 cotton harvest in Uzbekistan (hereinafter ILO TPM 2019 report), February 2020, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_735873.pdf, Foreword, p. 2.

¹⁰ Temporary Procedure for the organization of non-governmental cotton command units to mobilize unemployed people to cotton picking and motivate them in order to ensure the timely cotton harvesting in 2017, Annex 4 to the Minutes of the Meeting #01-03/1-211 of September 12, 2017 of the Republican Committee for Enhancing Economic Reforms in Agriculture, approved by the Prime Minister, September 12, 2017.

¹¹ Uzbek Forum interview with Women's Committee representative, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 16, 2019.

¹² Uzbek Forum interview with police officer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, November 3, 2019.

¹³ Uzbek Forum interview with police officer, Uchkuprik district, Fergana, October 10, 2019.

¹⁴ Uzbek Forum interview with *mahalla* council secretary, Bulokboshi district, Andijan, October 13, 2019.

¹⁵ Information about the *mahallas* who participated in the cotton harvest as of October 3, 2019, Buka, Tashkent region.

¹⁶ Hard to See Harder to Count: Survey Guidelines to Estimate Forced Labour of Adults and Children, International Labor Office, Geneva, 2012, p. 23-24, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182096.pdf.

¹⁷ Order No. 492 of the Ministry of Emergencies, the involvement of personnel of the Ministry of Emergencies in the cotton harvest in Jizzakh, Tashkent, September 27, 2019.

¹⁸ Letter No. 14/4022 from the Head of the Department of Education and Ideology of the Ministry of Defense to Elena Urlaeva, November 19, 2019.

¹⁹ Uzbek Forum interviews with police officer, Andijan, Andijan, October 7, 2019; police officer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, November 3, 2019; police officer, Urgench, Khorezm, October 20, 2019; soldier, Khudzhobad district, Andijan, October 18, 2019; soldier, Shavot district, Khorezm, October 28, 2019; firefighter, Uchkuprik district, Fergana, December 11, 2019; and cadet at firefighting academy traveling to Jizzakh, October 3, 2019.

²⁰ Uzbek Forum interview with police officer, Uchkuprik district, Fergana, October 10, 2019.

²¹ Uzbek Forum interview with police officer, Urgench, Khorezm, October 20, 2019.

²² Uzbek Forum interviews with maintenance worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, November 1, 2019; bank employee, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh November 2, 2019; water line worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, November 2, 2019; bank worker, Shavot district, Khorezm region, November 20, 2019; *hokimiat* employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 29, 2019; department of culture employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 20, 2019; labor center employee, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, September 29, 2019; bank worker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, October 7, 2019; *hokimiat* employee, Gurlen district, Khorezm, October 21, 2019; *hokimiat* employee, Shavot district, Khorezm, October 27, 2019; tax inspector, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, October 6, 2019; electric utility worker, Buvaida district, Fergana, October 14, 2019; roadworks employee, Bagdad district, Fergana, October 15, 2019; engineer, Markhamat district, Andijan, October 14, 2019; factory worker,

Markhamat district, Andijan, October 15, 2019; mother of two pickers who picked for water utility employees, Altynkul district, Andijan, October 14, 2019; land use department employee, Andijan city, Andijan, October 8, 2019; factory employee, Andijan city, Andijan, October 26, 2019; factory employee, Bulokboshi, Andijan, October 28, 2019; factory employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 6, 2019; factory economist, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 8, 2019; electric utility employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 18, 2019; replacement picker recruiter for Promstroibank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 14, 2019; recruiter for Microcreditbank, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, September 15, 2019; Microcreditbank employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 16, 2019; Halk Bank employee, Ellikkala district, Karakalpakstan, September 16, 2019; Turtkul gin employee, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 29, 2019; Kungrad Soda Factory employee, November 6, 2019; deputy department director, Nukus water utility, November 20, 2019; and Nukus gas company, November 19, 2019.

²³ Uzbek Forum interview with Uzbekenergo employee, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 5, 2019.

²⁴ Ibid and Uzbek Forum interview with Uzbekenergo picking group leader, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 5, 2019.

²⁵ Uzbek Forum interview with *mahalla* employee, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, October 8, 2019; culture department head, Yangikurgon district, Fergana, October 11, 2019.

²⁶ Uzbek Forum interview with water utility worker, Uchkuprik, Fergana, October 16, 2019.

²⁷ Uzbek Forum interview with maintenance department worker, Bagdad district, Fergana, October 25, 2019.

²⁸ Uzbek Forum interview with factory economist, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 8, 2019.

²⁹ Uzbek Forum interview with water utility engineer, Bulokboshi district, Andijan, November 2, 2019.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Uzbek Forum interviews with nurse 1, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 26, 2019; nurse 2, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 26, 2019; with teacher, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 28, 2019; teacher, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 29, 2019; medical worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 26, 2019; teacher, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 27, 2019; kindergarten worker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, November 8, 2019; teacher, Shavot district, Khorezm, October 13, 2019; department of education employee, Urgench, Khorezm, October 20, 2019; nurse, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, October 8, 2019; teacher, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, October 26, 2019; teacher, Dangara district, Fergana, October 14, 2019; kindergarten teacher, Yangikurgon, Fergana, October 25, 2019; education official, Bagdad district, Fergana, October 20, 2019; teacher, Buvaida district, Fergana, October 22, 2019; and kindergarten teacher, Oltyaryk district, Fergana, October 25, 2019.

³² Uzbek Forum interview with nurse 2, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 26, 2019

³³ Uzbek Forum interview with nurse 2, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh, October 26, 2019; medical worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 26, 2019; teacher, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 27, 2019; kindergarten worker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, November 8, 2019; teacher, Shavot district, Khorezm, October 13, 2019; department of education employee, Urgench, Khorezm, October 20, 2019; nurse, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, October 8, 2019; teacher, Dangara district, Fergana, October 14, 2019; kindergarten teacher, Yangikurgon, Fergana, October 25, 2019; education official, Bagdad district, Fergana, October 20, 2019; teacher, Buvaida district, Fergana, October 22, 2019; and kindergarten teacher, Oltyaryk district, Fergana, October 25, 2019.

³⁴ Uzbek Forum interview with kindergarten worker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, November 8, 2019.

³⁵ Uzbek Forum interview with market seller 1, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 15, 2019; market seller 2, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 15, 2019; market seller, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 16, 2019; shopkeeper, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, October 15, 2019; shopkeeper, Toshlok district, Fergana, October 17, 2019; and shopkeeper, Buvaida district, Fergana, October 21, 2019.

³⁶ Information on the daily amount of cotton to be harvested by enterprises and organizations sent from Yangiyul city to Chinaz district for the cotton harvest 2019, October 4, 2019.

³⁷ Uzbek Forum interviews with central hospital employee, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 15, 2019; doctor, nurse, and two technical staff at pediatric tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 18, 2019; medical worker from medical center, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 19, 2019; nurse from polyclinic, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 19, 2019; orderly from tuberculosis hospital, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 19, 2019; maternity hospital nurse, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 29, 2019; Turtkul Central Hospital doctor, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, October 29, 2019; Turtkul Medical Union employee, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, November 11, 2019; polyclinic nurse, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, November 11, 2019; and cardiologist nurse, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, November 11, 2019.

³⁸ Uzbek Forum interview with employee of Sanitary Epidemiological Station, Ellikkala district, October 29, 2019.

³⁹ Uzbek Forum interviews with central hospital employee, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, October 15, 2019.

⁴⁰ Uzbek Forum interviews with kindergarten employee, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, November 25, 2019; school employee, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, November 25, 2019; six school employees; Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, November 12, 2019; Uzbek Forum interview with two teachers, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, November 25, 2019.

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⁴² Uzbek Forum interview with teacher, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, November 25, 2019.

⁴³ Ibid.

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- ⁴⁵ Stories appear in the Uzbek media annually touting skilled workers, government officials, and even celebrities picking cotton, apparently to support the notion that picking cotton has cultural significance and thereby perhaps makes employees more amenable to being mobilized. In just one example from 2019, a newspaper reported on judges picking cotton. At a time when the judicial system is clogged with cases, this seems like a misplaced use of resources. As Uzbekistan seeks to modernize its economy and strengthen its institutions, it should abandon this practice. “Судьи собрали 1,6 тонны хлопка за день в Самаркандской области [Judges picked 1.6 tons of cotton in a day in Samarkand],” *Gazeta.uz*, October 22, 2019, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/10/22/cotton/>.
- ⁴⁶ Uzbek Forum interview with labor center employee, Yangibazar district, Khorezm, September 29, 2019.
- ⁴⁷ Letter No. 23/19-01/07/263 from the director of the Chirchiq Labor Center Z. Kutuzov to Elena Urlaeva, March 25, 2020.
- ⁴⁸ Statement by Kh. A. Saidakhmedov, Chairman of Maxam-Chirchiq, February 21, 2020.
- ⁴⁹ “They said we wouldn’t have to pick and now they send us to the fields” – Forced Labor in Uzbekistan’s Cotton Harvest 2018, Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, April 2019, https://www.uzbekforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Cotton_Harvest_2018_Klein_Mail.pdf.
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- ⁵⁵ Uzbek Forum interview with soldier, Khudzhobad district, Andijan region, October 18, 2019.
- ⁵⁶ Uzbek Forum interview with soldier, Shavot district, Khorezm region, October 28, 2019.
- ⁵⁷ Uzbek Forum interviews with water line worker, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, November 2, 2019; kindergarten worker, Yangibazar district, Khorezm region, November 8, 2019; pensioner, Gurlen district, Khorezm region, October 21, 2019; engineer, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 14, 2019; factory worker, Markhamat district, Andijan region, October 15, 2019; soldier, Khudzhobad district, Andijan region, October 18, 2019; land use department employee, Andijan city, Andijan region, October 8, 2019; factory employee, Bulokboshi, Andijan region, October 28, 2019; water utility engineer, Bulokboshi district, Andijan region, November 2, 2019; voluntary picker, Buz district, Andijan region, November 5, 2019; factory employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 6, 2019; factory economist, Markhamat district, Andijan region, November 8, 2019; and electric utility employee, Andijan, Andijan region, November 18, 2019.
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UZBEK FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Uzbek Forum for Human Rights (formerly Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights / UGF) is a Berlin-based NGO dedicated to protecting human rights and strengthening civil society in Uzbekistan. Uzbek Forum works with a network of independent human rights defenders inside Uzbekistan who conduct monitoring of human rights abuses, including forced labour in the cotton and silk sectors. Uzbek Forum's evidence-based reports are used to conduct advocacy and shape policy with the Government of Uzbekistan, the EU and the UN as well as raise awareness in the regional and international media.

Primary author: Allison Gill

Editors: Umida Niyazova and Lynn Schweisfurth

Cover Design: Patricia Baca

Layout: Gia Janeza

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UZBEK FORUM
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

UZBEK FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS E.V.

PO Box 35 05 46

10214 Berlin

Germany

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<https://www.uzbekforum.org/>

info@uzbekforum.org