

Presentation to the Business & Human Rights
Summer Academy 2022



UZBEK FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

DEFENDING HUMAN
RIGHTS IN UZBEKISTAN

What We Do

- Forced Labor and Labor Rights
- Land Confiscations
- Corruption and Asset Recovery
- Multilateral Development Banks
- Strengthening Civil Society



Forced Labor in the Cotton Sector

- Network of independent human rights defenders conduct monitoring
- Evidence-based reporting
- Joint reports and advocacy with international human rights organizations
- Active member of the Cotton Campaign



**10
YEARS**

MONITORING AND REPORTING
ON CHILD AND FORCED LABOR
IN UZBEKISTAN'S COTTON SECTOR



Uzbekistan's Cotton Sector

- World's largest mobilization of workers
- One million children forced to pick cotton
- 200,000 students recruited to the fields
- State-set quotas and low pay drive forced labor



The Cotton Campaign

- Clear mission to end forced labor
- Diverse membership and expertise
- Extensive network
- Targeted advocacy
- Call for boycott of Uzbek cotton



The Pledge

- Over 300 brands and retailers pledge not to source Uzbek cotton
- Economic pressure leads to improvements
- Abolition of child labor, state quotas



Forced Labor & Multilateral Development Banks

- Complaint filed against IFC in 2016 for use of forced labor.
- Report on World Bank's links to projects using forced labor.
- Impact: 200,000 students recalled from the fields
- Need for independent monitoring of rights violations in projects financed by MDBs.



“We Can’t Refuse to Pick Cotton”

Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

UGF

Indorama Agro

- Loans from IFC and EBRD
- Labor rights violations
- Illegal land confiscations
- Mass redundancies
- Anti trade union activities
- Illegal use of pesticides



Civil Society

- Restrictive NGO laws
- Lack of independent civil society voices
- Lack of capacity and resources
- Need for independent monitoring



Mission Accomplished?

- No systematic government organized forced labor in 2021 harvest
- End of the boycott
- Need for responsible sourcing
- Independent monitoring and reporting



Thank You!
<https://www.uzbekforum.org/>



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