

"We want farmers to have full freedom": No Need for Forced Labor when Farmers are Empowered to Pay Decent Wages: Spring Cotton Fieldwork 2018

September 2018

The district hakim appointed the head of the tax authority to oversee farms in my area. He sends his employees and they come and demand that we work. If you tell them about your problems and ask for help, no one will come, no one will ask you about your problems, they will only demand the cotton quota when the time comes. Last year, when the ILO came [to the tax authorities] scurried away and we felt relief. But they sent the ILO away with lies and cover up. The credit farmers receive is spent [by others] before it even gets to the farmers. We want farmers to have full freedom. Land, and the right to decide what to grow on the land, should be given to farmers. And no one should interfere in my business. But there are no farmers who can demand this without fear."

Farmer, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018



Farmer's Field camp, Khorezm Region, June 2018.

Most Public Sector Employees Freed from Spring Cotton Work

In 2018 the Uzbek-German Forum found that the government did not forcibly mobilize health and education workers to the cotton fields en masse during the spring cotton fieldwork season. Although the Uzbek-German Forum documented several cases of forced spring cotton fieldwork by technical staff of schools and health institutions, the majority of education and health workers interviewed said that, for the first time in years, they were not sent to work in the cotton fields in spring 2018. Spring cotton fieldwork, including field preparation, planting, thinning, weeding, and topping, usually starts in April or early May, depending on the region, and can last from one to two months. For years the government forced education and health workers and some other public sector employees to perform this fieldwork for no pay and under threat of penalty, including dismissal from their jobs.¹

The majority of farmers interviewed said that the government still requires them to grow cotton and wheat, even when these crops are not profitable for them, and that local authorities, including law enforcement, control every aspect of the process and hold them accountable for meeting their production quotas. Farmers who do not meet their cotton quotas can have their land taken away and face further consequences, leading them into debt. Farmers in Karakalpakstan faced especially difficult conditions and complained that despite poor soil quality, lack of water, and high labor costs, they were still required to grow cotton and would be punished if they do not meet their quotas.

In 2017 and 2018, the government of Uzbekistan has made public high-level commitments to end forced labor in cotton production. These include president Shavkat Mirziyoyev's pronouncement at a May meeting of central and regional officials that "public organizations should never even touch cotton.... We don't need child and forced labor." He also announced a directive to the prime minister to take necessary measures to ensure that no workers in the public sectors participate in cotton production.²

In April this year, Mirziyoyev ordered officials to stop using public employees and students for street cleaning, repairs, and other "public" work, a message reiterated by Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov at a meeting with regional and district officials.³ In Fergana region, all but one public sector worker interviewed said that since these measures, their employers had stopped requiring them to participate in forced labor, including in the cotton fields.⁴ In several other regions however, public sector employees, farmers, market and factory employees, and three schoolchildren said that although they did not have to work in the cotton fields in spring 2018, government officials continued to force them to work involuntarily, for no pay and under threat of penalty, in other sectors or withheld money from their salaries to pay for such work.⁵ These sectors include silk cocoon production and harvesting, "public" works such as street cleaning, and the village improvement program "Obod Kishlok [Well-Maintained Village] decreed by Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev in March 2018.⁶



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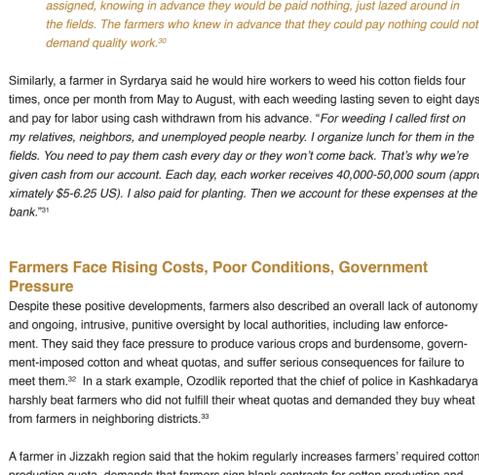
Local officials use coercion, including threatening farmers that they will lose their land, to force farmers fulfill annual silk quotas. Farmers, in turn, oblige farm members, or pay local laborers to assist in the cultivation of silkworm cocoons to meet required production quotas and avoid penalties.

Local authorities continued to include public sector employees in several regions in state-organized agriculture production, especially wheat. At a May 28 meeting at the Samarkand regional administration, *hokim* Turobjon Juraev assigned oversight and responsibility for the wheat harvest in the Samarkand region to the heads of public sector organizations, including schools and colleges.⁷ A participant of the meeting, which was held from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., described the tone as aggressive and said that Juraev behaved in an intimidating manner.⁸ Organizations were assigned to manage the wheat harvest in the most difficult and challenging districts and farms. A school director from Bekabad in the Tashkent region, said that he was assigned to guard wheat in the fields. "We will answer with our heads if even one gram of wheat is stolen.... I am ordered [to guard the wheat] and like a soldier I have to follow orders. It is an order from the *hokimiat*."⁹ The director said that he would be punished with losing his job if he refused to guard the wheat or if any wheat was lost.¹⁰

Cases of Forced and Child Labor in Spring Cotton Work

Seven monitors for the Uzbek-German Forum conducted monitoring of spring cotton fieldwork in Jizzakh, Syrdarya, Fergana, Andijan, Khorezm, and Tashkent regions, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Monitors conducted 200 brief interviews, 70 in-depth interviews with farmers, education and medical workers, other public sector employees, schoolchildren, labor union officials, local government and mahalla council officials. It conducted site visits to farms, schools, colleges, clinics, hospitals, banks, markets, local government agencies, and other institutions.

The Uzbek-German Forum documented isolated cases of public sector institutions sending employees to work in the cotton fields at the behest of local authorities. A medical worker in Karakalpakstan said that he and other medical workers were required to weed cotton fields in Koniklid district for eight days in May during which they had to stay overnight. He said that "he was not brave enough" to refuse to work because his director threatened to fire staff who refused to participate in forced labor.¹¹ The medical worker said that he and others were brought back from the fields for a day and then sent back to weed for three more days.¹² The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education announced that a university department head in Karakalpakstan was fired for bringing students to the fields to "help" a farmer. The statement did not explain if the university employee acted on his own initiative or on the orders of an official, or why the head of a university department would decide to involve students in agriculture.¹³



Workers from a cotton factory in the city of Beruniy (Karakalpakstan) are sent to weed cotton in the area of Shumaniy, May 25, 2018.

Several employees of a cotton gin in Beruni district in Karakalpakstan said they were being sent to weed the cotton fields in Shumaniy, 300 kilometers away, for ten days.¹⁴ In response to a report about this, representatives of a trade union and the Ministry of Labor said the information was not confirmed.¹⁵

Several non-teaching staff of schools in Bayavut district in Syrdarya, including guards, cleaners, librarians, and specialists said that they were sent to cotton fields for 15-20 days in May and June.¹⁶ They said that they and 80-90% of school technical staff worked under orders from the head of the district department of education, and were threatened with dismissal or a reduction of their hours if they refused. School staff said that they had to pay for their own food and received no compensation for the work.¹⁷

An inmate of a low-security prison colony, where prisoners can work off site, said that he and about half of the 300 inmates worked in the cotton fields planting, thinning, and weeding cotton for about ten hours every day earning between 20,000 and 50,000 soum (approximately \$2.46-6.17 US) per month.¹⁸ He said that inmates who had complained about working conditions and punitive measures taken against prisoners in the cotton fields, including beatings, had suffered reprisals such as being transferred to the higher security prisons.¹⁹ International law prohibiting forced labor does not prohibit work exacted as part of a lawful sentence imposed by a court. However, such work may be carried out under the supervision of a public authority and inmates may not be hired for or placed at the disposal of private individuals or companies, such as cotton farms controlled by private farmers.²⁰

An Uzbek-German Forum monitor in Jizzakh observed farmers, including several children, who said they were sent by their mahalla council to weed cotton. When the farmer attempted to send the children home, emphasizing the prohibition on child labor, other workers asked the farmer to allow the children to work because their families needed the money. The farmer agreed but directed them to the field far from the road so they could not be seen and to hide if any observers came to work.²¹

Lack of Protection for Workers and Poor Working Conditions

The Uzbek-German Forum found violations of decent work standards for spring fieldwork in a case where workers were hired privately. For example, one fieldworker said that a woman hired her, her two minor children, and other temporary additional workers, to do spring fieldwork on a farm. She complained about poor conditions and long hours each day. She said that although her children worked alongside her, they and several other children in the group who worked with their parents, were not paid.²² In a complaint the woman submitted to the Uzbek-German Forum she said

I was hired to weed cotton fields by a woman named Rohat. She did not pay my children and later kicked them out of the fields saying 'you aren't working hard enough'. My two children and I began weeding at 7:00 in the morning. We returned home at 11:00 p.m. We worked the entire time in the sun; there was not a single shady place to get out of the sun. We had an hour for lunch but the food was very bad, boiled rice without meat and we all got sick for an afternoon. She only let us leave the field after it got dark. She treated us very badly. Please help me get paid for my children's work. There were 43 of us altogether including 7 or 8 children younger than 18! 23

Increase Prices for Cotton and Access to Cash Enabled Farmers to Hire Voluntary Labor

Farmers identified two major factors in their ability to use only voluntary labor in spring fieldwork in 2018. The first is the significant increase in the procurement price for cotton — the price set by the government at which farmers are required to sell their crop to the government.

The government announced a procurement price of 3,555,500 soum (approximately \$444 US) per metric tonne in 2018 for first grade medium-staple fiber, the most common type of cotton in Uzbekistan, as compared with 1,888,130 soum (approximately \$230 US) in 2017 for the same type and grade of cotton.²⁴ A farmer in Syrdarya said that even at this price, he would be happy if his cotton earned enough to just to repay the credit, but that he did not expect to earn a profit from cotton.²⁵ Another major development is the ability of farmers to receive cash from banks. The combination of these two factors gave farmers more resources for cotton production, including the ability to pay workers for spring fieldwork as well as the cash on hand needed to pay payers.²⁶ One farmer said, "I've said it all along.... It there was a realistic price for cotton and if farmers had money, they could organize everything themselves [without using forced labor]."²⁷

Farmers sign contracts with the government to produce a specified amount of cotton and to allocate a certain number of hectares of their land to cotton production. They receive financial credit for 60% of the value of their production contracts at 3% interest.²⁸ Previously, farmers had no autonomy over the allocation of these funds or access to cash. Instead, funds were allocated to earmarked bank salaries for particular needs and could only be used, via bank transfer, for these purposes.²⁹ Accounts for spring fieldwork could not be included in calculating costs of production and funds were not allocated for this purpose. Instead, farmers relied on their own farm staff and labor employees allocated by local officials. These brigades were comprised of public sector employees, people receiving benefits, and others required to work by the government and received no money for spring fieldwork.

One farmer in Jizzakh said that hiring workers to weed the cotton fields was better for farmers than using forced labor because they could pay a decent wage and demand high quality work.

100,000 soum (approximately \$12.34 US) per hectare has been allocated for weeding three times, for a total of 300,000 soum (approximately \$37 US). In 2016 and even in 2017, the bank wouldn't let us take more than 10,000 soum (approximately \$1.66 US in 2016 and \$1.25 US in 2017) per hectare. Resources didn't allow it. Now for a day of weeding, farmers pay 25,000-30,000 soum (approximately \$3 -3.70 US). People come running to farmers like that. And having a private contract with each worker is better for the farmer too because it will create a demand for quality work. Those who came from various organizations because they were assigned, knowing in advance they would be paid nothing, just lazied around in the fields. The farmers who knew in advance that they could pay nothing could not demand quality work.³⁰

Similarly, a farmer in Syrdarya said he would hire workers to weed his cotton fields four times, once per month from May to August, with each weeding lasting seven to eight days and pay for labor using cash with advance. "For weeding I called first on my relatives, neighbors, and unemployed people nearby. I organize lunch for them in the fields. You need to pay them cash every day or they won't come back. That's why we're given cash from our account. Each day, each worker receives 40,000-50,000 soum (approximately \$5-6.25 US). I also paid for planting. Then we account for these expenses at the bank."³¹

Farmers Face Rising Costs, Poor Conditions, Government Pressure

Despite these positive developments, farmers also described an overall lack of autonomy and ongoing, intrusive, punitive oversight by local authorities, including law enforcement. They said they face pressure to produce various crops and burdensome, government-imposed cotton and wheat quotas, and suffer serious consequences for failure to meet them.³² In a stark example, Oziolik reported that the chief of police in Kashkadarya harshly beat farmers who did not fulfill their wheat quotas and demanded they buy wheat from farmers in neighboring districts.³³

A farmer in Jizzakh region said that the hakim regularly increases farmers' required cotton production quota, demands that farmers sign blank contracts for cotton production and increases the quota several times between planting and harvest.³⁴

Farmers also said that the government continues to require them to allocate a significant amount of their land to cotton production, although high costs and difficult conditions mean that many struggle to meet their quotas. Some said that even with the increased procurement price they will not profit from cotton and are prevented by the authorities from choosing what crops to grow, including crops that are profitable for them and appropriate for their land conditions.³⁵

The Uzbek-German Forum interviewed 12 farmers in the Turtkul, Ellikkala, and Beruni districts of Karakalpakstan, where the World Bank has made significant investments in irrigation projects that benefit the cotton sector.³⁶ According to these farmers, despite poor soil quality and an extreme lack of adequate water, the government continues to impose cotton production requirements on them, enforced by local authorities and the newly formed Farmers Council.³⁷ Eight of the farmers interviewed said they would not grow cotton if they had a choice.³⁸ These farmers also complained that banks did not issue them cash to pay workers for spring fieldwork and that they had to pay workers using their own cash reserves.³⁹ For example, one farmer said that the bank allocated the farmer's cotton advance towards repaying his outstanding debt leaving him nothing with which to hire voluntary field labor.⁴⁰ In another case, a farmer said that the bank did not issue him cash, but issued the payments to fieldworkers and that the amount allocated was not sufficient for him to attract voluntary workers.⁴¹ Farmers explained that they were supposed to hire workers for spring fieldwork through the State Labor Exchange and that they were allocated 500,000 soum (approximately \$62.50 US) per month for spring fieldwork but that the amount was not sufficient. One farmer said he went from house to house to try to recruit voluntary workers but no one would agree to the conditions provided by the government via the Labor Exchange, so he had to pay for workers from his own pocket, pushing him further into debt.⁴² As in other regions, farmers in Karakalpakstan had to pay each worker 25,000-30,000 soum per day but in some other regions, they had difficulty attracting sufficient temporary labor from among their relatives and neighbors.

They only give money for salaries in cash. The administration of the Farmer's Council allocates the rest of the credit as they see fit, without even asking me. They don't allocate anything for fieldwork. I pay fieldworkers the money that I received for my salary, but that doesn't even cover a tenth of the cost of weeding. I paid all expenses for spring fieldwork from my own pocket. I paid for weeding myself, by borrowing money from my relatives and selling my livestock. Nobody cares how I am going to find money to pay the workers. They just say 'find it, do the work or we will lock you up, get rid of you.' They only threaten and insult me.⁴³

As the Uzbek-German Forum has described in previous reports, the problem of forced labor in Uzbekistan's cotton sector includes the situation of farmers required to produce cotton. Farmers described the lack of control, senseless and intrusive orders from local and regional authorities—for instance for all farmers in a region to grow a particular crop, regardless of suitability—constant extortion for "informal" payments, and lack of power in negotiating contracts all interfere with the development of farming in the country and improving the situation of farmers.

Changes over the last year that resulted in freeing the majority of public sector workers from forced spring fieldwork have not extended to changing the overall vulnerable situation of farmers. Agricultural lands in every district continue to be divided into four sectors, each overseen by a different official who bears responsibility for delivering harvests: the district hakim, the head of police, the prosecutor, and the head of the tax authority. This means that farmers are under the direct oversight of one of these officials. Farmers, who are required to grow cotton even at a loss, still do not have stable funds to hire sufficient voluntary labor. These pressures are at odds with President Mirziyoyev's statement that farmers should not grow cotton to fulfill quotas but to create jobs and increase incomes, indicating that actual policy has not caught up with official rhetoric.⁴⁴ This gap between rhetoric and practice means that the positive development of freeing public sector employees from forced spring fieldwork in 2018 cannot be taken as a durable change or an indicator of future practice until the vulnerable situation of farmers is addressed.

1 See "Fieldwork never ends for us: Forced Labor in Cotton Spring Fieldwork in Uzbekistan" Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights, October 2018, http://uzbekgermanforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/REPORT_2017.pdf, accessed July 16, 2018.

2 Shavkat Mirziyoyev: named ne nuzun detiyni o'rin prindintelnyy trud (Shavkat Mirziyoyev: We Don't Need Child and Forced Labor), Kun, May 31, 2018, <https://kun.uz/news/20180531/shavkat-mirziyoyev-nam-ne-nuzun-detiyni-o'rin-prindintelnyy-trud> (accessed July 18, 2018).

3 Mirziyoyev: o'tqiravlyat' uchitelliy poliyat'at' uyichi - zto predatelstvo ne tolyko v otnoshenii meyn, no i v otnoshenii noyoy poliyat'at' (Mirziyoyev: Sending teachers to sweep the streets is treason not only against me, but against my policies), Sadridin Ashur, Ozodlik, April 16, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29174153.html> (accessed July 18, 2018); "Kazhdyi sluchay prindintelnyy truda kak CH (Mirziyoyev directed the government to handle every case of forced labor as an emergency)," Ozodlik, April 16, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29174153.html> (accessed July 18, 2018); "Kazhdyi sluchay prindintelnyy truda budet priyranen k CH - premyer [Every case of forced labor will be treated as an emergency—Prime Minister], Gazeta Uz, April 18, 2018, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ruz/2018/04/18/forced-labor/> (accessed July 18, 2018).

4 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with teacher, Aty-Otyk district, Fergana region, June 20, 2018; tax inspector, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, June 11, 2018; child center employee, City-Aryk district, Fergana region, June 20, 2018; teacher, Buvaida district, Fergana region, June 20, 2018; school psychologist, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, May 26, 2018; teacher, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, May 26, 2018; and teacher, Uchkuprik district, Fergana region, June 1, 2018.

5 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with teacher, Andijan, Andijan region, May 11, 2018; doctor, Buvaida district, Fergana region, July 10, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Bayavut district, Syrdarya region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Buvaida district, Fergana region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Bayavut district, Syrdarya region, May 20, 2018; farmer, Zarboskan district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 30, 2018; farmer, Izboskan district, Andijan region, June 10, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 28, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 22, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

6 In otnoshenii glavnyy rayonnoy lanchy, bespochinno izbiyshitoy fermerov, nachata sluzhebnyyay provodka [Internal investigation launched against district chief of police who brutally beat farmers], Ozodlik, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29325303.html>, June 28, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018); for English translation see Uzbek-German Forum, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/internal-investigation-launched-against-chief-of-district-police-for-brutally-beating-farmers/>, July 1, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018).

7 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 27, 2018.

8 head of farm, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, July 18, 2018; farmer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, June 7, 2018; farmer, Dusitk district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Zarboskan district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 30, 2018; farmer, Izboskan district, Andijan region, June 10, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

9 In otnoshenii glavnyy rayonnoy lanchy, bespochinno izbiyshitoy fermerov, nachata sluzhebnyyay provodka [Internal investigation launched against district chief of police who brutally beat farmers], Ozodlik, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29325303.html>, June 28, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018); for English translation see Uzbek-German Forum, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/internal-investigation-launched-against-chief-of-district-police-for-brutally-beating-farmers/>, July 1, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018).

10 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 27, 2018.

11 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, May 27, 2018; head of farm, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, July 18, 2018; farmer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, June 7, 2018; farmer, Dusitk district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Zarboskan district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 30, 2018; farmer, Izboskan district, Andijan region, June 10, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

12 In otnoshenii glavnyy rayonnoy lanchy, bespochinno izbiyshitoy fermerov, nachata sluzhebnyyay provodka [Internal investigation launched against district chief of police who brutally beat farmers], Ozodlik, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29325303.html>, June 28, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018); for English translation see Uzbek-German Forum, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/internal-investigation-launched-against-chief-of-district-police-for-brutally-beating-farmers/>, July 1, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018).

13 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 27, 2018.

14 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, May 27, 2018; head of farm, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, July 18, 2018; farmer, Pakhtakor district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, June 7, 2018; farmer, Dusitk district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Zarboskan district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 30, 2018; farmer, Izboskan district, Andijan region, June 10, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

15 In otnoshenii glavnyy rayonnoy lanchy, bespochinno izbiyshitoy fermerov, nachata sluzhebnyyay provodka [Internal investigation launched against district chief of police who brutally beat farmers], Ozodlik, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29325303.html>, June 28, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018); for English translation see Uzbek-German Forum, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/internal-investigation-launched-against-chief-of-district-police-for-brutally-beating-farmers/>, July 1, 2018 (accessed August 1, 2018).

16 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 27, 2018.

17 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

18 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

19 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

20 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

21 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, July 18, 2018.

22 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, July 9, 2018.

23 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Bayavut district, Syrdarya region, July 10, 2018.

24 Uzbek-German Forum interviews with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, July 18, 2018; farmer, Bayavut district, Syrdarya region, July 10, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Gulistan district, Khorezm region, June 9, 2018; farmer, Buvaida district, Fergana region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Bayavut district, Syrdarya region, May 20, 2018; farmer, Zarboskan district, Jizzakh region, June 4, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 30, 2018; farmer, Izboskan district, Andijan region, June 10, 2018; farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 28, 2018; farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

25 For a detailed explanation of the investments and World Bank commitments regarding forced and child labor in project areas, see Uzbek-German Forum and Human Rights Watch, "We Can't Refuse to Pick Cotton" – Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan 2017, June 2017, http://uzbekgermanforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/REPORT_Uzbekistan2017-27-06.pdf, pp. 30 and 89.

26 The Farmers Council is a state organization formed in April 2018 by presidential decree; membership in the Council is mandatory for all farmers. The Council has the authority to determine if a farmer has met his requirements and has used his land responsibly. If the Council decides that a farmer has not met his responsibilities or has not used his land responsibly, it can strip him of membership. Membership is mandatory. This provides local authorities a basis for taking a farmer's land. President approves measures to improve activities of farmers, dekhkans farms and landowners," UZ Daily, April 29, 2018, <https://www.uzdaily.com/articles-43711>.

27 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018; farmer, Beruniy district, Karakalpakstan, June 25, 2018; and farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, May 29, 2018.

28 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

29 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

30 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

31 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, July 18, 2018.

32 President' rasskazal o problema s rozhnyay khlopka a zrov rozu [The President discussed problems with the cotton harvest of the year], Podrobno uz, July 4, 2018, https://podrobno.uz/cat/pollits/president-rasskazal-o-problemah-k-s-ur7?phrase_id=129050 (accessed September 4, 2018).

33 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 1, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

34 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 3, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

35 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer 2, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, June 21, 2018.

36 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Turtkul district, Karakalpakstan, July 18, 2018.

37 Uzbek-German Forum interview with farmer, Zarbord district, Jizzakh region, July 9, 2018.

38 Cotton quotas are both area and volume-based.

39 See Bakhodir Murodov and Alisher Ilkhomov, "Uzbekistan's Cotton Sector: Financial Flows and Distribution of Resources," Open Society Foundations Eurasia Program, October 21, 2014,