

ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN UZBEKISTAN'S COTTON INDUSTRY

THE SOLIDARITY CENTER'S U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S BUREAU
OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS PROGRAM IN UZBEKISTAN

A long-running global advocacy campaign led by the Cotton Campaign, of which Solidarity Center was a founding member, helped push the Uzbekistan government to implement reforms that brought systemic forced labor to an end in 2021 – removing an estimated two million children and adults from a closed, state-organized forced labor system of cotton production. Although this was a major accomplishment, maintaining this progress and providing workers in Uzbekistan's cotton and textile sectors with fair compensation and dignity on the job is a longer journey.

PARTNERING WITH CIPE

The Solidarity Center signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in December 2023 with the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Employer's Association of Cotton-Textile Clusters of Uzbekistan and our co-implementing partner, the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), to cooperate on improving labor compliance to help bring more global buyers to Uzbekistan.

"As countries and companies seek to move away from cotton produced with forced labor, our project helped develop a sustainable sourcing alternative that aligns with international labor standards and the needs of responsible producers and buyers."

Rudy Porter, Solidarity Center's Regional Program Director for Europe and Central Asia

COTTON RIGHTS

In advance of 2023 and 2024 harvesting seasons, the Solidarity Center and CIPE worked closely with stakeholders in government, civil society and business to work from the field up and from oversight authorities down, to build knowledge within the cotton sector about fundamental rights and strengthen mechanisms to ensure those rights are secured.

10,000+ LEAFLETS

The Solidarity Center and CIPE, since 2023, have prepared and printed tens of thousands of leaflets for distribution to cotton pickers during the harvest season. These leaflets provide cotton pickers with accessible and comprehensive information about their fundamental rights as seasonal workers under Uzbekistan's Labor Code, including essential worker protections and contact information for the Labor Inspection hotline and a project-run Telegram channel where workers can anonymously report violations and seek free legal consultation.

200+ PEOPLE

More than 200 people participated in nine Solidarity Center pilot labor rights workshops in 2024, of whom more than 50 signed up for the project's Telegram reporting channel and 10 sought free legal consultation from the project's lawyer.



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