



Chronicle of the labor situation in Uzbekistan

Media review for the period
March – May, 2018



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This issue of the „Chronicle of Forced Labor in Uzbekistan“ presents an overview of the Uzbek media over the past three months. Since President Mirziyoyev has taken office, a weakening of censorship has been observed, allowing local journalists to cover stories of forced labor more widely. The last three months have been significant with the leadership of Uzbekistan moving away from complete denial of the existence of forced labor, to acknowledgement of the problem and promises to end this vicious practice. The peak period for mass mobilized forced labor is during the cotton harvest. The forthcoming cotton season will show whether the government of Uzbekistan is ready, willing and able to implement the changes they have promised to eradicate the practice.

ILO explained the use of forced labor in Uzbekistan

(February 14, 2018) <http://www.fergananews.com/news/28387>

The Government of Uzbekistan is demonstrating strong political will to solve the problem of forced labor; however, regional authorities are not keeping up with the processing and execution of an enormous number of orders and decrees. This was reported by the head of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, Beate Andrees, when she presented the report “Independent monitoring of measures to end child and forced labor during the cotton harvest in 2017 in Uzbekistan”, commissioned by the World Bank. The ILO again claims that children are not being forced to collect cotton and the problem of forcing adults to participate in the cotton harvest has been resolved by the authorities in a systemic manner.

The ILO report was based on 3,000 personal conversations, for which a representative sample was taken from 2.6 million cotton collectors, as well as information given by 1,000 respondents during phone conversations with citizens. The ILO highlights that this research was conducted without warning or participation of government officials.

As a result, the ILO concludes that it obtained evidence that the vast majority of cotton collectors worked in the fields voluntarily and that Uzbek people clearly understand the inadmissibility of child and forced labor.

In 2016, the ILO carried out similar monitoring, which resulted in the absence of cases of systemic use of child and forced labor in the cotton sector of Uzbekistan. However, the reports of independent organizations, as well as some human rights defenders, contradict the ILO findings.

In autumn 2017, Fergana news agency reported that the human rights advocate, Yelena Uralyeva, found children working in the fields of Baliqchi district of the Andijan region. She took photos of pupils of the 5th grade of school No.1 who were collecting cotton under the supervision of their teacher. The human rights defender also witnessed teachers of school No.13 bringing primary school children to the fields.

The head of the Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF), Umida Niyazova, questioned the ILO findings and claimed that "...they are far from realistic because the methodology of this organization does not conform to the standards of independent and objective research...I am glad to confirm some positive changes, but there is still much to be done to leave the problem of forced labor in the past."

Messages from social networks published on the Ozodlik radio website "Teachers Forced to Renovate Houses at Their Own Expense"

(March 04, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29076932.html>)

"Before the president's visit to the Andijan region, public sector employees are forced to renovate houses along the main roads. In Pakhtabad district, the agricultural college principal forces his subordinates to renovate houses in Khayotbakhsh mahalla at their own expense. What a shame and disgrace! Teachers with a higher education degree, who are considered intellectuals, work in other people's houses for free as ordinary laborers (although laborers are paid for their work)! Heads of institutions humiliating teachers so much do not deserve their positions!"

"School Children in Angar District Still Forced to Collect Waste Paper and Scrap Metal"

(March 04, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29076925.html>)

"In the Angar district of the Surkhandaryo region, teachers and pupils are forced to collect waste paper and scrap metal. It made their parents very angry. When we asked the school administration whose order it was, they told us that it was the order of the District Department of Public Education. However, when we made a complaint to the Regional Department of Public Education on this matter, we were told that they know nothing about it. Is it possible for the District Department of Public Education to order teachers and pupils to collect waste paper and scrap metal without the order of their supervisory body? On the news websites, we read that the Prime Minister, Abdulla Aripov, said that from now on, neither teachers nor pupils would be forced to collect waste paper and scrap metal. Where are you, Mr. Prime Minister? Ask about the situation with teachers and school children in Angar district!"



“Students in Andijan Forced to Plant Plastic Flowers”

(March 17, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29105969.html>)

“Students of the Andijan State University are forced to glue artificial flowers made of plastic to the trees and plant them along the streets. Who do the authorities want to deceive: themselves or the visitors?”

“College Teachers Sent to Clean Railway Crossings”

April 08, 2018 <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29151878.html>

“Teachers of the Gulbakhor industrial professional college in the Yangiyol district of the Tashkent region were forced to clean the railway crossing area.”

“I don’t see my wife for days”

(March 25, 2018), <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29121643.html>)

“My wife works at kindergarten No.44 in Angren city in the Tashkent region. For the last 2-3 years, she has been forced to stay there on night duty. Is it legal or is it just the will of the management? The kindergarten administration threatens staff with disciplinary measures for refusal to do night duty. According to my wife, city public education employees come to the kindergarten at night to check that staff has stayed on night duty. How legal is all of this? Who benefits from these night duties?”

The Trade Union Federation of Uzbekistan: Workers’ Organization or the Instrument to Manage Workers?

(March 15, 2018 <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/federatsiya-profsoyuzov-uzbekistana-organizatsiya-rabochikh-ili-instrument-dlya-upravleniya-rabochimi/?f=sANwmylp>)

What is The Trade Union Federation of Uzbekistan (FPU)? How independent is it in its work and what is its part in causing forced labor in the cotton sector of the country? These questions were analyzed by Andrey Mrost in his research. He has a PhD in geographical science working on issues of irrigated agriculture impact on the environment in Uzbekistan, a specialist in international labor relations, and has over 20 years of experience with international trade unions. Mr. Mrost has also conducted research into corporate social responsibility and is an SA 8000 certified auditor.

According to Mr. Mrost’s research, the Uzbek state orchestrated one of the largest mass practices of forced and child labor in the world in the production of cotton, its main agricultural product.

Under pressure from international criticism, the World Bank, the largest investor in Uzbek agriculture, confirmed that the bank would continue to finance its projects on the condition that the state eradicates child and forced labor.

The ILO reached an agreement with the government of Uzbekistan to conduct child labor monitoring in 2013 and then launched a country-wise program on decent work. Later, the ILO made an agreement with the World Bank to conduct “third-party monitoring” for them. The ILO’s offer to conducting the monitoring as a “third party” raised doubts regarding its legitimacy from the very beginning. The ILO did not find [trans. – evidence] of systemic use of child labor in the cotton sector in 2013, but a year later loudly declared the successful eradication of it. Thus, the ILO confirmed initial doubts about the effectiveness of its monitoring.

Historically, the Trade Union Federation of Uzbekistan was a loyal ally of the government in the forced mobilization of cotton collectors.

In his address to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the FTUU defines itself as a democratic and independent organization, which complies with the principles of the ITUC.

However, the FTUU presidium has exclusive power; all member organizations of the FPU must bring their charters and programs in conformity with the Action program of the Federation, which declares absolute subordination to the President of the country. The FPU controls the content of all employment contracts, and statutory documents of the FPU legitimized forced labor in the country through the distortion of the national tradition named “khashar” [trans. – community cleaning day] and its conversion into the instrument of forced labor.

The FPU charter, Uzbek law on trade unions, and fundamental ILO conventions (87, 98) prohibit political parties or employers from interfering in the work of trade unions. However, the FPU chairs and members of the presidium are from the government, thus, almost the entire FPU presidium consists of deputies, businessmen, and hokimiyat employees. Besides, the majority of them work at the same time in electoral commissions at all levels, ensuring not the transfer of the people’s will to the government but rather the government’s will to the people.

Similarly, the analysis of normative documents show that even the Chamber of Trade and Commerce of Uzbekistan (TPP), which ostensibly represents employers’ interests, is in fact fully under control of current political power. It does not represent a non-governmental and non-commercial organization, encompassing business subjects on a voluntary basis as stated in the TPP charter.

In fact, one could say that the current tripartite mechanism in Uzbekistan is a sham, misleading mainly the international community and primarily UN bodies. It does not function and does not resolve social issues.

Trade unions, together with employees, have lost the means to influence employers and the government to meet their demands as a way to resolve labor conflicts. This includes the issue of forced labor.

Expected visit of President Mirziyoyev to Samarkand killed a young teacher

(Source: Ozodlik radio, March 16, 2018,/ Uzbekistan, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/ozhidaemyy-vizit-prezidenta-mirzieeva-v-samarkand-ubil-moloduyu-uchitelnitsu/?f=s-ANwmylp>)

On March 14, 2018, a teacher from the Kattakurgan district of the Samarkand region, Diana Yenikeeva, was run over by a truck while she was cleaning the area along a highway.

The mother of the deceased teacher, Oksana Yenikeeva, told reporters in an interview with Ozodlik radio that the day she was killed, her daughter was sent to clean roadside areas. The colleague of the deceased reported that school workers are forced to clean the streets during their working hours. The local administration sent public sector employees to clean the sides of motorways before the expected visit of President Mirziyoyev. "Every day 10-15 teachers were forced to leave their classes and engage in community works."

It is not the first time that people engaged in forced labor works have died. On May 15, 2015, Zuhra Kabilova, an employee of school No. 24 from Angren city, was killed by a car while cleaning the central road. On the last day of her life, 55-year-old Zuhra Kabilova, who had worked at the school for over 20 years, went to the motorway to participate in forced beautification works, which authorities present as khashar held on any day of the week.

Forced works in Uzbekistan are traditionally associated with cotton production. However, many people recognize that this inhumane practice takes place in almost all forms of labor relations, both in the state and private sector.



Press Secretary of the President of Uzbekistan answered a question about forced labor

(Fergana news agency, March 17, 2018)

<http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/press-sekretar-prezidenta-uzbekistana-otve-til-na-vopros-o-probleme-prinuditelnogo-truda/?f=sANwmylp>

The Uzbek President's Press Secretary, Komil Allamjonov, announced on his Facebook page that the cause of Diana Yenikeeva's death would be investigated.

A social network user asked Allamjonov a number of questions: "In the run-up to the President's visit, *khokims* "force", mainly teachers, to clean roadsides. Is it the right thing to do?"

The press secretary responded: "Of course, what happened is a very unfortunate incident. Currently, possible causes of this tragedy are being investigated. Appropriate measures will be taken in accordance with the findings of this investigation. My deep condolences go to the family and relatives of the deceased."

Deputy of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan encouraged teachers and doctors to confront forced labor and a Deputy Minister of Public Education to prohibit forcing teachers to community works

(March 21, 2018/Uzbekistan)

<http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/deputat-oliy-mazhlisa-uzbekistan-prizval-uchiteley-i-vrachev-k-protivostoyaniyu-prinuditelnomu-trudu-a-zamministra-narodnogo-obrazovaniya-k-zapretu-privlekat-uchiteley-k-obshchestvennym-rabotam/?f=sANwmylp>

A 23-year-old school teacher, Diana Yenikeeva, from Kattakurgan district of the Samarkand region in Uzbekistan, killed on March 14, 2018, by a truck during a so-called *khashar*, may be included on a list of people who made a significant contribution in the fight against state-organized forced labor in Uzbekistan. She contributed to it with her life.

She is not the first and not the only one that was killed or that died during cotton campaigns and "voluntary charity *khashars*" because of a stroke, having been run over by cars or due to other tragic circumstances. But she is the first person whose death has not gone unnoticed at the highest level of government in the country. It spurred the Deputy of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, Abdurashid Kadyrov, to encourage doctors and teachers to confront those responsible for state-organized labor exploitation, and encourage the Deputy Minister of Public Education to present initiatives to develop measures to prohibit forcing teachers to participate in community works.

Abdurashid Kadyrov said that Uzbekistan is a unique country where deputies build objects in *kishlaks* [trans. – rural settlement], doctors plant flowers in the streets, and teachers clean roads, afraid of dismissal if they do not participate in community works for free. The deputy encouraged doctors and teachers to stop relying on trade unions and fight against forced labor on their own by filing complaints about forced labor to various agencies. In other words, the Minister explicitly stated the inability of Uzbek trade unions to execute their duties.

Uzbekistan: Teachers in Fergana Forced to Collect Scrap Metal

(March 19, 2018/Uzbekistan, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/uzbekistan-fergan-sikh-uchiteley-prinuzhdayut-k-sboru-metalloloma/?f=sANwmylp>)

A teacher from the Fergana district told a Xabar.uz news website reporter that the local administration forces teachers to collect scrap metal.

According to him, there are 62 schools including two lycées. Every institution must collect 10 tons of scrap metal and every teacher is required to find and bring 200 kilos.

If teachers cannot find the required amount, they must pay money as an alternative at the rate of 1,000 Uzbek *soum* per kilo of metal. In other words, every teacher was forced to give a fifth of their wages, i.e. 200,000 *soum*.

The Uzbek President's Decree No. PD-3438 of October 18, 2017 "On measures to prepare scrap metal, production, and use of ferrous metal in 2018" says: "local government bodies are prohibited from setting targets for educational and medical facilities to submit scrap and ferrous metal waste".

Teachers in Andijan Forced to Buy Trees for Beautification of Schools

(April 02, 2018 <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29137810.html>)

School teachers from the Boz district of the Andijan region in Uzbekistan have complained that the district administration is forcing them to buy spruce saplings at higher market value prices for the beautification of schoolyards.

One of the Boz district school teachers told a Ozodlik radio reporter that teachers are forced to buy the saplings for 20,000 *soum* each (approximately \$2.50 US), although the market price is only 3,000 *soum*. "Our school principal told us that either we pay for the saplings in cash or the cost would be deducted from our salaries. We understand that the principal is only carrying out the *hokim's* order, but it is still offensive..."

Another school teacher told how the local administration does not allocate money for greening and beautification of schoolyards. “We asked our principal why we couldn’t buy the trees at the market and he told us that we have to plant the ones provided by the local authorities.”

According to Ozodlik radio sources, the regional administration has provided 300 spruce saplings to the Boz district.

This is not the first time that teachers in Uzbekistan have been forced to buy trees. Last year, school teachers in the Shovot district of the Khorezm region were also forced to buy saplings, but by autumn they had all dried up. After that, the teachers had to give money to paint the dried trees green.

Wages of vacant positions in Tashkent are lower than monthly average wages in Uzbekistan

(April 07, 2018/Uzbekistan, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/zarabotnye-platy-vakansiy-rabochikh-mest-v-tashkente-nizhe-srednemesyachnoy-zarabotnoy-platy-po-uzbekistanu/?f=sANwmylp>)

The website of the City of Tashkent in the section “Open Positions” publishes a list of vacancies, showing wages in eleven city neighborhoods.

The vast majority of vacant positions offer monthly wages between 400,000 – 800,000 Uzbek *soum* on average, which is substantially lower than the official average monthly wage around the country which is 1,346,000 *soum*.

Even the jobs that require higher education degrees are often paid less than 1,000,000 *soum*, which are otherwise paid a country-wide average.

Let us remind you that the minimum wage in Uzbekistan since December 1, 2017, is 172,240 *soum* (previously 149,775 *soum*) per month, and the average monthly salary according to official information in the period from January-September 2017, is 1,000,346 *soum* (or 123.6 USD at the Central Bank exchange rate on December 12, 2017). The data was presented by the first Deputy Minister of Economics, Mubin Mirzayev, at his meeting with journalists.

To maintain a decent standard of living in a large and expensive city like Tashkent, these wages are clearly low which is why not many people are willing to take such jobs. In addition, such low salaries do not bring a strong commitment to work, resulting in poor quality and effectiveness of such work.

According to official data at the end of June 2017, the number of people registered as job seekers was 8,300 (a less than credible figure – ed.), which is 42.7% more than at the end of June 2016 (5,800 people).

“In accordance with information from the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations, in 2017, the number of unemployed people was 837,000. ”, the documents say. According to the report of Goscomstat [trans. – state statistics committee] on employment and the labor market at the end of 2017, the level of unemployment in Uzbekistan in 2017 was 5.8% of the economically active population.

Uzbekistan: In Andijan, a ninth-grader killed a peer in the heart with a knife - the teachers at that time were engaged in the cleaning of the territories

(source: Ozodlik radio, April 10, 2018,/UZBEKISTAN, <https://www.ozodlik.org/a/andijon-da-uquvchi-tengdoshini-pichoqladi/29151664.html>)

On April 7, Muhammadasror Sobirov, a 9th-grade pupil of secondary school No. 10 in the city of Andijan, killed a classmate of neighboring school No. 29. by stabbing him in the heart. According to an employee of the city department of public education, all the teachers of the school were at a “*subbotnik*” [trans. – community cleaning day], organized by the city administration, at the time of the murder. The information was also confirmed to Ozodlik radio by an employee of the Andijan police, who wished to remain anonymous.

According to the employee of the Department of Public Education in Andijan city, who asked the Ozodlik reporter not to disclose his name, issues of education and discipline in city schools are in a deplorable state because of the constant involvement of teachers in various public works such as cleaning and landscaping, the source said.

- The *hokim* (head) of the city of Andijan, Dilmurod Rahmatullaev, summons school principals to meetings three times a day and orders them to send teachers to work on improving the surrounding areas of the city. At first, our teachers do not know rest; they leave their lessons because of constant “*subbotniks*”, they do not have time for educational work. At least 30 percent of Andijan teachers are daily engaged in cleaning streets, plowing land and planting flowers. Teachers sweeping streets have completely lost credibility in the eyes of their students. However, no one can say a word. If they somehow try to object to the *hokim*, he will start to insult them, calling them „creatures“ and „evil spirits.“ The authorities have simply lowered the reputation of our teachers. You’ll see, all the blame will be laid on the shoulders of the headmaster again,” the employee of the Andijan city department of public education told the Ozodlik radio reporter.

Last Bell. Why teachers leave Uzbek schools

(source: Fergana international news agency, April 10, 2018,/ UZBEKISTAN, <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/9889>)

The deficit of teaching staff in Uzbek schools still remains a problem, although, according to the information from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, 20,000 students graduate from educational institutions of the country every year. However, the majority of graduates are in no hurry to stay in schools.

The reason for it is simple: teachers simply do not have time to compose any kind of reports or plans. The lack of time here is chronic and year-round. Teachers have to do a large part of work at home: checking pupils' copybooks, writing notes, preparing visual aids and didactical materials, self-preparation... In addition to all this, teachers are forced to be at school until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, clean the school and the schoolyard, and engage in agricultural work. There is also a total lack of any respect either from children and their parents or the school management.

Another problem is teachers' low wages. Today in Tashkent, a teacher who works 20 hours in high school, or 18 hours in a primary school receives only 800,000-1,000,000 *soum* (\$100-120 US) on average, and even less in some regions.

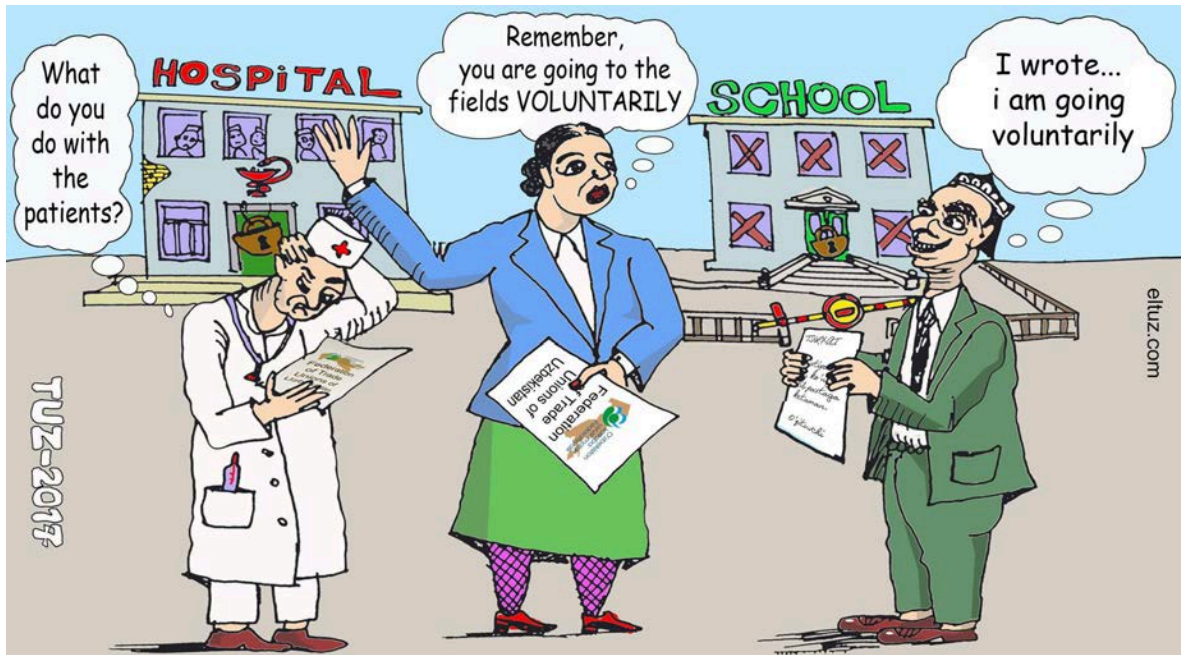
According to teachers who spoke anonymously with Fergana reporters, the life of an ordinary school teacher in Uzbekistan is one of chronic poverty coupled with nervous exhaustion.

Pre-school Teachers Sent to Clean Village at Their Own Expense

source: Ozodlik radio, April 15, 2018

<http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/vospitatelnits-detsadov-otpravili-na-uborku-terri-torii-sela-za-svoy-schet/?f=sANwmylp>)

"In the Fergana region, all pre-school teachers were sent to clean the public spaces of the Ashirkulmergan village by the order of the head of the district department of pre-school education. We, poor pre-school teachers, took hoes and participated in the forced *subbotnik*. The head of the pre-school education department threatened that teachers who refused to participate in the *subbotnik* would be fired. We covered our expenses for travel and food from our own pockets. If we work as slaves, then who will watch and educate the children? When will we get rid of forced labor?! Minister of preschool education, Agrippina Sheen, promised that she would punish leaders who do not obey law and order. She should punish the leader who forced us to engage in common labor! We call on the minister to save his subordinates from forced labor!"



Mirziyoyev: Sending Teachers to Clean the Streets isn't Only a Betrayal of Me but it is a Betrayal of My Policy

(April 16, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29169728.html>)

On April 13, 2018, during a video conference in the Saikhunabad district of the Syrdaryo region, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, discussed the widespread problem of forcing public sector workers, especially teachers and nurses, to participate in beautification works.

As reported by the website Kun.uz, President Mirziyoyev said he also felt guilty for the tragic death of school teacher Diana Enikeeva: „Two or three days before this tragedy, some director, head or hokim said that a guest would come to the region. However, in my heart, I have a feeling that it all happened because of me. Once again and for the last time I warn all leaders - if of teachers, doctors or students in any area are involved in public works, then the punishment will be very tough. In addition to dismissal, the responsible manager will answer before the law. It makes no difference to me, even if he has some merits, he will still be fired. Now I have to say this because these cases do not stop.”

Problem of forced labor in Uzbekistan. What did they talk about in the Cabinet of Ministers?

(April 18, 2018, <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2018/04/18/problemy-prinuditelnogo-truda-v-uzbeki-stane-o-cem-govorili-v-kabinete-ministrov>)

As reported on April 17 of this year, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Aripov held a video conference dedicated to the prohibition of coercion of students, employees of medical and educational institutions, as well as representatives of other social sectors to carry out field and beautification works, and the personal accountability of heads of institutions at all levels.

At the meeting it was noted that despite the reforms implemented by the President and his statement at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, together with the ILO, to introduce effective measures to prevent child and forced labor, and under the Senate of Oliy Majlis a separate commission on forced labor has been set up, many heads of institutions still force social workers, mostly teachers, and doctors, to carry out public works.

They also talked about the tragic consequences of such situations (in particular, the death of the teacher Diana Yenikeeva, who was involved in public works).

Certain facts were revealed such as the installation of fake greenhouses along the road in Kashkadarya region, the use of [trans. – forced] labor of college students in a textile factory in the Jizzakh region, the systemic forced labor of social workers in Andijan city and the Khodzhaabad, Marhamat, Kurgantepa, Jalakuduk districts to clean streets, beautify *mahallas*, and perform field work. Some leaders allow these violations not only for the use of free labor but also for personal gain, which causes considerable discontent among the population.

It was revealed that the deputy governor of the Andijan region, N. Rahmonov and the *hokim* of Andijan city, D. Rahmatullayev, openly forced heads of pre-school educational institutions at meetings to purchase expensive seedlings of trees and flowers for street beautification at their own expense. If they refused, they were threatened with dismissal.

On the initiative of the head of state, the program „*Obod kishlok*“ („A well-organized village“) is being implemented on the ground. *Hokims* illegally force employees of budget organizations to implement this program. In addition, there is a widespread practice of involving doctors and teachers in agricultural work.

Analysis of the situation at higher educational institutions revealed that in the academic year 2017/2018, 17,000 people were involved in cleaning streets, 4,000 in the cleaning of irrigation canals, 7,000 in construction work, and 23,000 students and teachers in field work, weeding, pruning, and harvesting.

Thus, the various types of work involved more than 9,000 students and teachers in Karakalpakstan, 8,500 in Andijan, 5,000 in Jizzakh, 2,600 in Namangan and about 5,500 in the Tashkent region.

The meeting identified a number of tasks to end the forced involvement of social workers in public works. The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regional governor and the city of Tashkent instructed the scrutiny of persons responsible for impro-

vement works in the *hokimiyats* of regions, districts, and cities to organize state and public control in order to prevent violations of labor rights of workers, forced labor and the involvement of citizens in public works.

Day of Cleanliness is in free time. Medical workers are Mirzo-Ulugbek district patriots

(April 16, 2018/UZBEKISTAN, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/-Den-chisty-v-svobodnoe-ot-raboty-vremya/?f=sANwmylp>)

Human rights activist Yelena Urlayeva reports on another case of the forced involvement of medical staff in the compulsory cleaning of medical facilities. On April 10, she took photographs as the employees of hospital No.8 on the Karasu massif in Tashkent cleaned the sidewalks and weeded the grounds of their medical institution. According to the medical workers of polyclinic No.8, they are forced to carry out this work on the orders of the head physician, Zivaat Akbarova, and have to perform second-shift duties because they are forced to clean the sidewalks and weed along the road before they start work.

Yelena Urlayeva contacted the head physician of this hospital and asked her why doctors were cleaning the streets. The answer was that it was not the doctors, but the nurses and the human rights defender was asked „not to inform the Ministry of Health in order to avoid unwanted misunderstandings“.

Meanwhile, the *hokimiyat* of Tashkent denies forcing medical staff to clean the streets. In its official statement, the *hokimiyat* denied forcing the employees of hospital No.8 of the Mirzo-Ulugbek district to clean the streets, stressing that they, like the inhabitants of the district, actively participate in nationwide *khashar*, i.e. beautification and gardening work. “Employees carry out the cleaning of the grounds only on Saturdays, that is, the ‘Day of Cleanliness’ in their spare time”, reported uzbekiston.site.

Nevertheless, Urlayeva’s message was dated April 10 which was not a Saturday.

“We promise it won’t happen again” — hokims about forced labor

(April 18, 2018, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/04/18/hokims/>)

At a video conference meeting on the prohibition of forcing social workers and students to carry out field and beautification work, regional hokims, the hokim of Tashkent city, and the chairman of the *Zhokargy Kenes* [trans. – High Council] of Karakalpakstan promised that there would be no forced involvement of people in public works.

As the head of the government of Uzbekistan, Abdulla Aripov, stated: „We signed more than 12 conventions of the International Labor Organization, which ban the use of forced labor. Fulfillment of these conventions’ requirements is not only our duty, it is the improvement of the image of the country. I promise that workers of social institutions will no longer be involved in the beautification of public spaces by local authorities and management. I reported on this in comments on websites and social networks. I’ll take this case under my own strict control. If we do not do this, we will betray not only the country but also the president. We took a written pledge from every head of institutions so that they do not force people to work. You do not even know what documents you [trans. – sign]. This decision is not of the Cabinet of Ministers, but of the president. I say that you need to use residual funds in the budget to legitimately engage a temporarily unemployed population. It is unprecedented in the history of Uzbekistan that 714 billion soum were allocated [for the Foundation for Public Works]. You are not using these funds appropriately.”

“Forced labor was considered patriotic,” — Minister of Public Education

(source: «Газета.uz», April 19, 2018/UZBEKISTAN, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/prinuditelnyy-trud-schitali-patriotizmom-glava-mno/?f=sANwmylp>)

At a meeting on the prohibition of forcing social workers and students to perform field and beautification works, as well as the eradication of fraud, the Prime Minister criticized the lack of initiative of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health, Alisher Shadmanov.

The Minister of National Education, Ulugbek Inoyatov, admitted that he lacked the determination to stop the forced involvement of teachers in work that is not part of their job: „When it was necessary, I myself contributed to forced labor, considering it patriotic. It was our policy at that time. „

Abdulla Aripov said that students of higher education institutions are also involved in forced labor. In the course of analysis in 2017-2018, it was found that around 17,000 students and teachers were forced to clean the streets throughout the country, 4,000 to clean irrigation ditches, 7,000 to carry out construction works, and 23,000 to perform field work (plowing, pruning, harvesting).

In the context of regions, the various types of work involved more than 9,000 students and teachers in Karakalpakstan, 8,500 in Andijan, 5,000 in Jizzakh, 2,600 in Namangan and about 5,500 in the Tashkent region.

The Minister of Public Education and the Minister of Health, as well as a number of local government officials, were reprimanded for their shortcomings.

Even after the Mirziyoyev's criticism about forcing female teachers to night duties

(Source: Ozodlik radio, April 20, 2018/UZBEKISTAN, <http://www.labourcentralasia.org/ru/news/dazhe-posle-kritiki-mirziyaeva-zhenshchin-uchiteley-privlekayut-k-nochnym-dezhurstvam/?f=sANwmylp>)

Teachers in the Kitab district of the Kashkadarya region are forced to stay for night duty, despite the fact that the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoev, and Prime Minister, Abdullah Aripov, recently forbid the heads of institutions to force teachers to work outside the sphere of their main responsibilities. Teachers say female teachers send their relatives or specially hired people to work on night duty instead of themselves, in order to avoid being alone with male guards at night.

In a joint letter of teachers of secondary school No. 35 in the Kitab District of the Kashkadarya region, sent to the editorial board of Ozodlik on April 19, school authorities allegedly force them to work on night duty.

In a telephone conversation with an Ozodlik reporter, one of the school teachers said that daily night duty at the school was introduced on March 8 this year, after the appointment of a new director, Uktam Yorov. In support of his statement, he sent the editorial staff of Ozodlik a list of teachers recruited to do night duty.

The headmaster of school No.35, Uktam Yorov, in a conversation with a reporter from Ozodlik radio, stated that night duty was organized by the district hokim before public holidays to ensure safety when the school grounds are not secured.

After a conversation with the school director of school No.35, the Ozodlik reporter called the head of the Kitab District Education Department, Avlokul Avlaev, who immediately contacted Uktam Yorov. He asked on what basis Yorov had arranged for night duty at his school. Uktam Yurov replied to the head of the district that he never forced teachers to stay for night duty and did not tell the Ozodlik reporter about the organization of night duty at the school.

The number of Uzbek migrant workers is increasing in Kyrgyzstan

(May 09, 2018, <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/29216501.html>)

Following the opening of the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, there has been an increase in the number of Uzbeks who have to come to work in the construction and agricultural sectors. Employers in Bishkek, in the border areas of the Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad regions, value migrants from Uzbekistan because of their quality work and low wages.

Currently, young women from Uzbekistan work in the cotton fields of the Jalal-Abad region. For one day of work, the locals pay them 250-300 soum.

According to law, Uzbek citizens must register within five days after entering the territory of Kyrgyzstan, otherwise they face a fine of 10,000 soum. If the law is repeatedly violated, the citizen is deported. The employer must apply to the State Migration Service and obtain permits. A commission of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the State Migration Service examines the request and decides within two weeks whether to give permission or not.

The deputy head of the State Migration Service, Almaz Asanbayev, confirmed that the number of labor migrants from Uzbekistan is growing in Kyrgyzstan, but there are not yet exact figures.

Until 2010, it was normal for Uzbek citizens to work in the fields and construction in Kyrgyzstan. But with stricter controls at the border, labor migrants stopped coming.

The unpaid labor of teachers and doctors restricted in Uzbekistan

(May 16, 2018, <https://tengrinews.kz/sng/v-uzbekistane-zapretili-besplatnyiy-trud-uchiteley-i-vrachey-344403/>)

The Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan has forbidden *khashars* along roads and other dangerous places, reports Nuz.uz. According to the newspaper article, the government has defined clear rules for carrying out *khashars*. There is a ban on any volunteer work of citizens along highways, on streets with heavy traffic, on water areas and in waterfronts coastal, on construction sites, roofs of buildings and at hazardous production facilities. The list also includes all other places where a threat to the life and health of people may occur. Any types of forced labor of employees of organizations, including doctors and teachers, as well as students will be stopped. The ban includes not only works on landscaping and gardening, but also the collection of scrap metal and waste paper, as well as seasonal agricultural work. Law enforcement agencies will be involved in prosecuting officials who violate the resolution. *Khashars* can only be carried out on a voluntary basis. At the same time, state agencies and other organizations should be guided by a decree of the president or by a Cabinet decision on holding a national *khashar*. Work can only be carried out on the grounds of the organization, with the observance of labor and safety standards. Only landscaping, gardening and renovation of workplaces are allowed. All other types of work, including construction, repair and agricultural work, are strictly prohibited. Local government bodies are allowed to conduct *khashars* in the territory of their *mahalla* (quarter), norma.uz writes.

According to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy of Poland, over 1200 work visas were issued in 2017

(May 20, 2018, <https://ru.sputniknews-uz.com/migration/20180520/8262570/uzbekistan-polsha-trudoustroistvo.html>)

According to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy of Poland, in 2017, more than 1,200 work visas were issued to Uzbek citizens. In addition, Poland will consider the possibility of accepting about 3,000 construction workers from Uzbekistan.

The official dismissed after the incident involving the death of a schoolteacher, Diana Yenikeeva's, forced teachers to clean the streets again

(May 23, 2018, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29244542.html>)

Azamat Umarov, a former head of the Public Education Department of the Samarkand region, was removed from his post after the incident with the death of a teacher from Kattakurgan district, Diana Yenikeeva, who was run over by KamAZ truck when she was forced to clean the main road. On May 18, Umarov was appointed a director of the school No.62 for children with mental disabilities in the city of Samarkand and on the same day sent teachers to clean the schoolyard. This fact was confirmed in a telephone conversation of one of the school's teachers with an Ozodlik reporter.

The representative of the school No.62 administration confirmed to the reporter information that teachers are forced to clean streets on weekends. The deputy director of this school in the administrative and economic part, Gullola Mamatkulova, in a conversation with the Ozodlik journalist, said that all the teachers of the school went to cleaning the streets at their own will. However, she left unanswered the reporter's question about why teachers and tutors of the school were involved in forced labor on weekends. Mamatkulova advised addressing this question to the director.

Uzbekistan intends to receive new trade preferences from the European Union

(May 24, 2018, <http://podrobno.uz/cat/economic/uzbekistan-raschityvaet-poluchit-ot-es-no-vye-torgovye-preferentsii-/>)

Uzbekistan is to receive new trade preferences from the European Union. These issues were discussed on the eve of the talks in Tashkent by Foreign Trade Minister, Jamshid Khodjayev with the working group of the Council of the European Union on Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The purpose of the visit is to become familiar with the political and socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan, as well as to discuss the prospects for expanding cooperation between Uzbekistan and the European Union in trade and the economy.

„One of the steps to improve the terms of trade with the EU may be to obtain unilateral tariff preferences in the framework of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP +) by Uzbekistan.“ Currently, the republic enjoys the basic Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), according to which the country can export 3,000 commodity items to the EU without customs duties and 3,200 commodity items at reduced rates,” Khodjayev noted.

According to Khodjayev, the granting of tariff preferences within the framework of GSP +, will allow Uzbekistan duty-free access to more than 6,200 commodity items. He also added that Uzbekistan is interested in promoting the practical implementation of the Agreement to bilateral trade in textile products by the EU countries.

Currently, despite the fact that the date of entry into force of the Protocol on Amendments to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement is coming soon, the customs services of EU member states continue to create difficulties in the supply of Uzbek textile products. In this regard, the Uzbek side asked to consider the possibility of rendering assistance in bringing the provisions of the Textile Protocol to the staff of customs services and governments of the Member States of the EU.

Uzbekistan and Russia simplified the procedure of obtaining a patent for migrants

(April 26, 2018, <https://ria.ru/world/20180426/1519458582.html>)

According to Sputnik Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan has settled all issues regarding Russian language certificates and insurance, which are necessary to obtain a work permit for labor migrants in Russia.

„At this stage, we have solved the problem of issuing a certificate for the Russian language, which is necessary to obtain a permit. This already works, and we can now issue these certificates. We have also worked on the issue of insurance, both for the travel period and for obtaining a permit,“ a representative of the Agency for External Labor Migration of Uzbekistan told Sputnik.

At the same time, the agency is now settling another important issue on the recognition of medical documents issued to migrants in Uzbekistan in Russia.

„In order to settle this issue, it is necessary to meet several requirements of the Russian government. It is a very difficult process and if the Uzbek Ministry of Health is able to fulfill them, then I think that in the near future we will solve this issue as well,“ the source said. In addition, free courses for migrants in Russian, English, German and Korean have been

launched across the country, as well as vocational training in the most sought-after skills, such as welding, building, and others.

This year, Uzbekistan intends to officially send over 50,000 labor migrants to Russia. However, if in the second half of the year the law on recruiting activities is adopted in the Republic, this will significantly increase the number of migrants through the involvement of private companies in the process.

Uzbekistan and Turkey will ensure the protection of migrant workers' rights

(<https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/05/01/migrants/> , May 28, 2018

The Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Turkey signed an agreement on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families, the press service of the Ministry of Labor reported.

The document was signed in Tashkent on Monday during the state visit of Turkish President Rejep Tayyip Erdogan.

The agreement regulates issues relating to the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families who hold Uzbek or Turkish citizenship.

According to this agreement, migrant workers can work in the receiving state territory on the basis of agreements signed with employers, in accordance with the legislation of the receiving state.

The parties will also contribute in every way to the regulation of migration flows and cooperation to curb illegal labor in their countries.

Uzbek migrant workers cannot obtain payment for their work at construction site in Russia

<http://eltuz.com/video/203918/>, April 17, 2018

Bakhodir Mamatkulov and Orif Zhuraev have been going to various departments for more than half a year to get their salaries for work at a construction site in Yakutia (Russia). In all their troubles they blame the Agency of External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Labor of Uzbekistan.

On April 12, journalist Malokhat Eshonkulova met with them near the Prosecutor General's Office in Tashkent, where they arrived in the hope of meeting the prosecutor.

„In October 2017, together with a group of 36 people, I was sent to Russia by the Agency of External Labor Migration. We signed an annual contract, but after working for four months in very difficult conditions we did not receive any payment, lost health and returned home,“ says Orifjon Juraev from the Huzar district of the Kashkadarya region.

These men have an agreement with the Agency of Labor Migration, but none of them had an agreement with the employer. In turn, the Agency of Labor Migration had a vague agreement with the Almazinvestroy Company on recruitment of labor migrants which did not specify work and payment conditions.

„At first, 36 people arrived in Yakutia, and then the Agency sent 12 more people according to the same scheme. No one had an agreement with the employer, „said another victim, Bahadir Mamatkulov.

„The working conditions were very difficult. We were building a school when the outdoor temperature was 45 degrees below zero. When we arrived in Yakutsk, we made beds for ourselves of the planks available there and ate bread and rice that we brought with us, since no food was brought to us during 4 days. The Agency of Labor Migration promised us a salary of 40 to 80 thousand, however, the Almazinvestroy employer said that he will pay 30 thousand said a month, promising 5 thousand more for working outdoors,“ Bakho-dir Mamatkulov said.

According to these men, because of the absence of an agreement with the employer, in the first month, 12 men who came with them were detained by Yakutia police officers and fined for lack of work permits.

Having received no payment for their work, despaired of waiting and after working for 4 months they returned home to Uzbekistan. Since then, they have unsuccessfully appealed to various state bodies, including the Prime Minister's reception room and the Prosecutor General's office, trying to get paid for their hard work in Russia.

According to them, Migration Agency employees, who sent them to Russia in October 2017, hastily resigned after their return, and the new employees refuse to solve their problem.



“The management of the kindergarten No.114 violates the Government decree”

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/sizdan-telegram-majburiy-mehnat/29256825.html>

May 29, 2018

„Employees of the specialized pre-school educational institution No. 114 are still being forced to engage in public works. Does not the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers prohibiting the involvement of public sector employees in forced labor concern the heads of the institutions? Will they be punished for violating the government decree?“

“Who receives wages of ‘ghost workers’?”

May 23, 2018

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/sizdan-telegram-obodonlashtirish/29245256.html>

„I am Ulbeke Gulmanova. I live in the 42nd apartment of the 29th house in the TTZ1 quarter of the Mirzo Ulugbek district of Tashkent city.“ Since 2001, I’ve worked as a janitor in the Department for Improvement of the City of Tashkent, in the special department for the use and maintenance of engineering structures.

Near the TTZ factory, there are two tunnels. Our responsibility is to keep them clean. In the human resources department, I learned that six janitors were assigned for cleaning these tunnels. But actually, there are only 2 janitors cleaning these tunnels. After my colleague went on leave due to the birth of a child, I began to clean up the tunnels alone. Even

temporarily, a second person did not come to work. As a result, I fell ill. The management, having learned about my illness, required me to resign. When I said that I would write a complaint against them, my boss, Yunus Ahmedov, threatened that he would destroy me through his acquaintances. At first, I was afraid - I was thinking about my daughter, but now that I'm sick, I'm writing the whole truth.

As I wrote above, whereas there are officially six employees, only two people actually work. On paper, there are four other people employed at these positions. Someone is taking their salaries. I specifically know who these „ghost workers“ are. I can prove everything that I write. I demand a fair investigation of violations of the law in the system of procurement, the punishment of those responsible for misappropriation of state money and termination of unfair treatment towards me.

“Instead of teachers and doctors, bank workers are engaged in forced labor”

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/sizdan-telegram-majburiy-mehnat/29225939.html> , May 14, 2018

“I write from Turtkul city, Republic of Karakalpakstan. I am a bank employee. After the forced labor of teachers and doctors was forbidden, we bank workers, have are now subject to forced labor. On the orders of local authorities, we go from house to house in order to find unlawfully built facilities and study the living conditions of citizens. We also force farmers to sign contracts on planting pepper. Everybody knows that it is not possible to grow pepper in salty, damp soil. But nevertheless, we continue to force farmers to do it against our conscience.

The leadership that has teachers and doctors under its protection must protect us as well!

“Nurses in Shurchi district forced to collect scrap metal”

<https://www.ozodlik.org/a/sizdan-telegram-metallom/29204364.html>, May 2, 2018

“Shurchi district medical association employees in the Surkhandaryo region are ordered to collect 20 kilos of scrap metal and 4 kilos of waste paper each. If someone cannot submit the required amount, he must pay money. One kilo of scrap metal costs 1,000 *soum*, and one kilo of waste paper costs 1,500 *soum*. There are a lot of dissatisfied people but if they told a journalist or somebody else about it, they would be in trouble. They would become a victim of the fierceness of Chori Yuldoshev, the eternal head of the association.

Our President said: “Frankly, it is disgusting. The deception, forcing people, especially public sector employees, teachers, and students, to gentrify and sweep the streets is a betrayal of the state. It is a betrayal not only of me but also of the state policy.”



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June, 2018