



Human Rights Watch Submission: World Bank Group Systematic Country Diagnostic for Uzbekistan

August 2015

Human Rights Watch welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation process on the **World Bank Group's** (WBG) Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) for Uzbekistan.

Human Rights Watch urges the WBG to include in the SCD a frank analysis of **the Uzbek government's** appalling human rights record, which presents a serious obstacle to achieving the **WBG's twin goals** of ending extreme poverty and promoting inclusive development in Uzbekistan. While the **presentation the WBG prepared for the consultation on Uzbekistan's SCD identifies a number of** challenges the country faces to achieve sustainable development, it gives insufficient attention to human rights concerns that pose serious development risks. The SCD should correct this omission and develop strategies that take into account specific human rights concerns that would likely affect **Uzbekistan's pace of progress on poverty reduction or increases in shared prosperity.**

Human Rights Watch strongly encourages the WBG to address the following issues, including by highlighting them as challenges to sustainable development in the SCD, incorporating them into its policy dialogues with the government, and taking necessary measures to ensure they are addressed in proposed and ongoing WBG projects:

- The need to ensure community participation in identifying and shaping development priorities, including by addressing ongoing restrictions affecting civil society and the media and taking all necessary steps to ensure that people affected by WBG projects have the opportunity to participate in the development of such projects without reprisal.
- **The need to address ongoing concerns that present challenges to Uzbekistan's development goals**, including torture in detention, lack of accountability for past human rights abuses, forced sterilization of women and entrenched discrimination, including on the basis of religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The need to eliminate **the Uzbek government's** widespread use of forced labor, including children, in the cotton sector.¹

1. Barriers to Civic Participation in Identifying and Shaping Development Priorities

The WBG has increasingly emphasized the importance of civic participation and social accountability **for achieving the group's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.** The

¹ "Human Rights Watch Testimony at Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Corruption, Global Magnitsky, and Modern Slavery," Human Rights Watch, July 16, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/16/human-rights-watch-testimony-senate-foreign-relations-committee-corruption-global>.

government of Uzbekistan’s ongoing restrictions on independent media and independent civil society activists and organizations raise serious questions about the ability of civil society to engage in and express opinions about development initiatives in Uzbekistan.

The government of Uzbekistan severely limits freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion, and continues to wage an unrelenting crackdown on human rights work, independent journalism, peaceful opposition, and civic activity.² The Uzbek government has imprisoned thousands of people on politically motivated charges to enforce its repressive rule, and the authorities regularly go after civil society activists, opposition members, and journalists.³

In its latest report on Uzbekistan, the UN Human Rights Committee said **it remained “concerned** about the number of representatives of independent non-governmental organizations (NGO), journalists, and human rights defenders imprisoned, assaulted, harassed or intimidated, because of **the exercise of their profession.”**⁴ Among those imprisoned for no other reason than peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression are 14 human rights activists, five journalists, four opposition activists, three independent religious figures, and seven government critics.⁵

Those who attempt to assert rights, or act in ways deemed contrary to state interests, face arbitrary detention, violations of due process, and torture, as illustrated by the shocking incident of police detention and mistreatment of prominent rights activist Elena Urlaeva on May 31, 2015 as she was photographing and interviewing forced laborers in a cotton field.⁶ Police in Chinaz, a city in the Tashkent region, detained Urlaeva in a cotton field as she was photographing and interviewing forced laborers in the cotton fields, and subjected her to cruel and degrading treatment during an 18-hour interrogation about her work on forced labor. Police and doctors forcibly sedated Elena Urlaeva and then subjected her to a body cavity search, x-rays, and other abuse.⁷ Throughout the ordeal, police denied her access to the toilet and forced her to relieve herself outside the police station in the presence of police. Urlaeva says that the police filmed her and threatened to post the video on the internet if she complained about her treatment. Urlaeva said that police laughed at and humiliated her throughout her detention, **calling her a “bitch.” They confiscated her camera, notebook, and information sheet on the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.**⁸

² “HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General’s Trip to Central Asia,” Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

³ “Human Rights Watch Testimony at Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Corruption, Global Magnitsky, and Modern Slavery,” Human Rights Watch, July 16, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/16/human-rights-watch-testimony-senate-foreign-relations-committee-corruption-global>.

⁴ United Nations Human Rights Committee, “Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee: Uzbekistan,” New York, 8-26 March 2010, CCPR/C/UZB/CO/3, paragraph 24.

⁵ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

⁶ “HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General’s Trip to Central Asia,” Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

⁷ “Uzbekistan: Brutal Police Attack On Activist. Attack Highlights Urgent Need for UN Monitor,” Human Rights Watch, June 4, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/04/uzbekistan-brutal-police-attack-activist>.

⁸ “Uzbekistan: Brutal Police Attack On Activist. Attack Highlights Urgent Need for UN Monitor,” Human Rights Watch, June 4, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/04/uzbekistan-brutal-police-attack-activist>.

Another example of reprisals against human rights activists is the persecution of Aman Sagidullaev, a political activist advocating for self-determination of the region of Karakalpakstan and human rights more broadly since the late 1980s and 1990s, who is currently living in exile in Kyrgyzstan.⁹ In mid-2014 Sagidullaev wrote a public letter calling on the World Bank to place a hold on the Karakalpakstan irrigation project as long as the Uzbek authorities continued to suppress human rights in the region, engage in the use of forced labor in the cotton sector, and punish efforts by civil society to function.¹⁰ On September 27, 2014, a few months following Sagidullaev's open letter to the World Bank, 15 law enforcement officers from Uzbekistan's National Security Services ("the SNB"), conducted a raid on Sagidullaev's relatives' home in Karakalpakstan. According to Sagidullaev, during the raid the officers informed Sagidullaev's relatives that he was wanted on new theft charges and that he should "immediately stop his political activity."¹¹ This was just a single episode of the Uzbek authorities' efforts to detain Sagidullaev and intimidate other members of his family.¹²

In addition, in a particularly pernicious practice, authorities frequently extend the sentences of religious and political prisoners for alleged violations of prison regulations shortly before their terms are up, adding years to a prisoner's sentence in what appears a deliberate policy of keeping politically-sensitive prisoners incarcerated indefinitely.¹³ Human Rights Watch has documented the practice of arbitrarily extending the sentences of people imprisoned on political charges. The action is often taken just days before the person is to be released, on bogus grounds such as possessing "unauthorized" nail clippers, saying prayers, or wearing a white shirt and may result in years of additional imprisonment.¹⁴

A recent example is rights defender Azam Farmonov, whose wrongful nine-year sentence on politically motivated charges was arbitrarily extended by another five years shortly before his scheduled release in April 2015. Farmonov was the chairperson of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan in Gullistan, Syrdaryo region. He defended the rights of farmers and people with disabilities, including representing them in court as a lay defender. He was arrested on April 29, 2006, alongside another rights activist, Alisher Karamatov, on fabricated charges of extortion and sentenced to nine years after being tortured to confess and a trial marred by serious due process violations. Farmonov's sentence was to expire on April 29, 2015. But on April 6, authorities transferred him from the Jaslyk prison colony in Nukus, over 800 kilometers from Tashkent, to a punishment cell in the city of Nukus for unspecified "violations of prison rule." On May 21, Farmonov's wife, Ozoda Yakubova received a phone call from a former detainee in the Nukus pretrial

⁹ "Kyrgyzstan: Refugees From Uzbekistan Fear Tashkent's Long Arm," [eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org), December 11, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/71306>.

¹⁰ "The Saga Of Aman Sagidullaev and Alga Karakalpakstan" Qishloq Ovozi, Radio Free Europe, November 21, 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/alga-karakalpakstan/26704104.html>.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Aman Sagidullaev, Bishkek, October 15, 2014; Human Rights Watch interview with relative of Sagidullaev, name withheld, Bishkek, date withheld.

¹² "At Your Own Risk: Reprisals against Critics of World Bank Group Projects," Human Rights Watch, June 2015, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/worldbank0615_4up.pdf, p. 33.

¹³ "HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General's Trip to Central Asia," Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

¹⁴ "Uzbekistan: 5 More Years for Jailed Activist. EU, UN Should Support Creation of UN Rights Monitor," Human Rights Watch, May 28, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/28/uzbekistan-5-more-years-jailed-activist>.

detention center informing her that a regional court had extended Farmonov's sentence by five years for allegedly violating prison rules and that he had been transferred back to Jasyk prison. Yakubova was not notified of the trial dates for the extension and neither she nor any independent observers were able to attend the trial.¹⁵

One recent development with grave repercussions for freedom of expression in Uzbekistan was the September 2014 introduction of amendments that imposed new restrictions on bloggers, including a ban on "untrue posts and re-posts." Dunja Mijatovic, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) representative on freedom of the media, warned the measures would further undermine free expression in Uzbekistan.¹⁶

The World Bank Group should:

- Recognize in the SCD the ongoing repression of critical voices in the country, noting how ongoing restrictions undermine sustainable development.
- Emphasize in meetings about the SCD and CPF with government ministries and agencies the importance of meaningfully engaging with civil society organizations and creating an enabling environment for civic participation and social accountability. This would require ceasing arbitrary arrests and prosecutions of journalists and civil society activists and amending overbroad and vague laws used for these purposes.
- Encourage the government to enhance access to information and subject decision-making processes to public discussion and input at all levels, and support it to do so wherever possible. Examples include community budgeting initiatives; public, meaningful consultations about proposed legal reforms; and the continued creation of independent oversight bodies when needed.
- Ensure that affected communities and nongovernmental organizations fully participate in the development of the SCD, ensuring that:
 - Project documents are available in local languages, as well as Uzbek, Russian, and English. The SCD should also be translated into minority languages, at least into Karakalpak, which is a recognized regional language;
 - Consultations are conducted with affected people in a local language with an appropriate interpreter; and
 - Consultations are fully accessible.¹⁷

2. Key Human Rights Concerns that Present Challenges to Uzbekistan's Development

Goals

The World Bank Group should include in the SCD a frank analysis of Uzbekistan's performance in the field of human rights. Therefore, we urge you to highlight the following challenges that remain and

¹⁵ "Uzbekistan: 5 More Years for Jailed Activist. EU, UN Should Support Creation of UN Rights Monitor," Human Rights Watch, May 28, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/28/uzbekistan-5-more-years-jailed-activist>.

¹⁶ "World Report 2015: Uzbekistan," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

¹⁷ "Uzbekistan: Brutal Police Attack On Activist. Attack Highlights Urgent Need for UN Monitor," Human Rights Watch, June 4, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/04/uzbekistan-brutal-police-attack-activist>.

are some of the most critical and pressing issues in ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity in Uzbekistan.

Torture of Prisoners and ‘Incommunicado’ Detention

Uzbek authorities frequently practice torture in prisons and detention facilities, as shown by the previous example of human rights activist Elena Urlaeva (*See Section 7*). Indeed, in November 2013, the United Nations Committee against Torture stated that torture is “systematic,” “unpunished,” and “encouraged” by law enforcement officers in Uzbekistan’s police stations, prisons, and detention facilities run by the SNB. Methods include beating with batons and plastic bottles, hanging by wrists and ankles, rape, and sexual humiliation. The recent accusations by Gulnara Karimova, the president’s daughter, about SNB officials’ use of torture brought to the fore these politically sensitive topics.¹⁸

Although authorities introduced *habeas corpus* in 2008, there has been no perceptible reduction in the use of torture in pre-trial custody or enhanced due process for detainees. Authorities routinely deny detainees and prisoners access to counsel, and the state-controlled bar association has disbarred lawyers that take on politically sensitive cases.¹⁹ Judges routinely ignore torture allegations, admit torture-tainted evidence, and convict solely on the basis of confessions.²⁰ As a result, thousands of people have been convicted on overly broad charges of extremism in closed trials, which are often based on confessions procured through the use of torture and without the presence of independent counsel.²¹

The government has failed to meaningfully implement recommendations to combat torture made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Committee against Torture, and the Human Rights Committee. Its approach overall to international expressions of concerns remains one marked by denial and obfuscation. For over a decade now, the government has ignored all requests for access by UN special procedures (currently numbering 13), and has rejected virtually all of the recommendations for human rights improvements that UN monitoring bodies and the Universal Periodic Review have made.²²

Lack of Accountability and Justice for Past Crimes

For nearly a decade, the Uzbek government has refused an independent investigation into the 2005 government massacre in Andijan. On May 13, 2005, hundreds of largely peaceful protesters were

¹⁸ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

¹⁹ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

²⁰ “Addressing the human rights situation in Uzbekistan at the UN Human Rights Council 10 years after the Andijan massacre,” Human Rights Watch, May 12, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/12/addressing-human-rights-situation-uzbekistan-un-human-rights-council-10-years-after>.

²¹ “HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General’s Trip to Central Asia,” Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

²² “HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General’s Trip to Central Asia,” Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

killed by Uzbek government forces indiscriminately in the eastern city of Andijan.²³ The massacre was one of the largest mass killings in the former Soviet Union outside of an armed conflict since the fall of Communism, driving hundreds of people across the border into Kyrgyzstan.²⁴ It sent shockwaves around the world, highlighting the brutal human rights record of Uzbekistan's authoritarian president, Islam Karimov.²⁵

Authorities persecute anyone suspected of having witnessed the atrocities or who attempts to speak about them publicly. In 2014, Human Rights Watch confirmed that authorities in 2012 arbitrarily extended by 8 years the 10-year prison sentence of Dilorom Abdukodirova, an eyewitness to the massacre, following the common practice explained in Section 1. After fleeing to Kyrgyzstan in 2005, she settled in Australia. She was immediately arrested and imprisoned on her return in 2010, despite assurances she would not face prosecution.²⁶

During 2015, Human Rights Watch has interviewed many Uzbeks, most of them outside the country, who expressed fear about speaking on the record about the massacre, citing threats from the authorities to themselves and family members who remain in Andijan. They told Human Rights Watch that their relatives are still regularly called in for questioning. Some of their relatives reported being forced to sign statements that those who fled abroad after the massacre are terrorists.²⁷

Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

President Jim Yong Kim has affirmed that “[the World Bank Group] will not reach [its] twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity unless we address all forms of discrimination, including bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity.”²⁸ He has also clearly acknowledged that “ending discrimination against LGBTI people matters: it matters for individuals and families; it matters for communities; it matters for development,” and that “this discrimination is a direct threat to achieving the goals of ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity.”²⁹

Consensual sexual relations between men are criminalized with a maximum prison sentence of three years. Activists report that police use blackmail and extortion against gay men due to their sexual

²³ “Addressing the human rights situation in Uzbekistan at the UN Human Rights Council 10 years after the Andijan massacre,” Human Rights Watch, May 12, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/12/addressing-human-rights-situation-uzbekistan-un-human-rights-council-10-years-after>.

²⁴ “Addressing the human rights situation in Uzbekistan at the UN Human Rights Council 10 years after the Andijan massacre,” Human Rights Watch, May 12, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/12/addressing-human-rights-situation-uzbekistan-un-human-rights-council-10-years-after>.

²⁵ “Germany’s Blind Eye to Tashkent’s Abuse,” Human Rights Watch, May 13, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/13/germanys-blind-eye-tashkents-abuse>.

²⁶ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

²⁷ “Uzbekistan: Decade of Impunity for Massacre,” Human Rights Watch, May 7, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/07/uzbekistan-decade-impunity-massacre>.

²⁸ World Bank, “World Bank’s Kim Speaks Out Against LGBTI Discrimination”, May 17, 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/05/17/jim-yong-kim-speaks-out-against-lgbti-discrimination>.

²⁹ World Bank, “World Bank’s Kim Speaks Out Against LGBTI Discrimination”, May 17, 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/05/17/jim-yong-kim-speaks-out-against-lgbti-discrimination>.

orientation, threatening to out or imprison them. LGBT community members face deep-rooted homophobia and discrimination.³⁰

Women's Rights

The WBG's presentation on the online consultation for the SCD appropriately notes that **gender inclusion should be a focus of the Uzbekistan SCD. Some challenges highlighted in the WBG's presentation that should be further expanded in the SCD include barriers to access to education and gender-based occupational segregation.** Human Rights Watch encourages the WBG to broaden its analysis in the SCD to also include, among other topics, early marriage, violence against women,³¹ challenges facing female-headed households and widowed or divorced women, and issues disproportionately affecting rural women and women working in the agricultural sector such as gender-based inequities in land access.³²

Women in Uzbekistan also face gender-specific human rights abuses in healthcare settings. In 2014, Human Rights Watch interviewed gynecologists from Uzbekistan who reported that the Ministry of Health orders some doctors to perform a certain number of forced sterilizations each month. Some women who have given birth to two or more children have been targeted for involuntary sterilization, especially in rural areas. Gynecologists confirmed that surgical sterilizations are performed without **women's informed consent and in unsafe medical facilities.**³³

Harassment of Religious Practitioners Outside State Controls

Uzbek authorities severely curtail the freedom of religion, imposing tight restrictions on the freedom of worship, conscience, and belief; and they imprison religious believers who practice their faith outside state controls.³⁴ In July 2014, the Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders (IGIHRD) estimated that more than 12,000 persons are currently imprisoned on vague charges **related to "extremism" or "anti-constitutional" activity, with several hundred convicted in the past 12 months.**

Thousands of members of Uzbekistan's **Muslim community have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms under vague, overbroad, and ill-defined crimes for practicing their religious beliefs;**³⁵ and

³⁰ "World Report 2015: Uzbekistan," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

³¹ Human Rights Watch, Uzbekistan Turns its Back on Battered Women, July 9, 2001, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2001/07/09/uzbekistan-turns-its-back-battered-women>.

³² FAO, "Gender and Land Rights Database, Uzbekistan," undated, http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/general-introduction/en/?country_iso3=UZB (accessed August 27, 2015); Asian Development Bank, "Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment 2014," 2014, <http://www.adb.org/documents/uzbekistan-country-gender-assessment-2014> (accessed August 27, 2015).

³³ "World Report 2015: Uzbekistan," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

³⁴ "Addressing the human rights situation in Uzbekistan at the UN Human Rights Council 10 years after the Andijan massacre," Human Rights Watch, May 12, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/12/addressing-human-rights-situation-uzbekistan-un-human-rights-council-10-years-after>.

³⁵ "Addressing the human rights situation in Uzbekistan at the UN Human Rights Council 10 years after the Andijan massacre," Human Rights Watch, May 12, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/12/addressing-human-rights-situation-uzbekistan-un-human-rights-council-10-years-after>.

authorities also harass and fine Christians who conduct religious activities for administrative offenses, such as illegal religious teaching.³⁶

The World Bank Group should:

- Frankly discuss in the SCD entrenched discrimination based on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, age or other status, and how **institutionalized discrimination undermines the government's development agenda.**
- Highlight in the SCD the limited access to justice and rule of law; ongoing impunity for past abuses; and the challenge that these issues present for durable peace and development.
- Highlight in the SCD violence against women, especially forced sterilization, as a significant **obstacle to Uzbekistan's development efforts, and work with the government to agree strategies for eliminating such violence.**

3. Child and Forced Labour

Uzbekistan uses one of the largest state-sponsored forced labor systems in the world to produce cotton, which nets enormous revenues for the government.³⁷ State-organized forced labor of children and adults in the cotton sector remains widespread. Human rights monitors in Uzbekistan report the Uzbek government forced farmers to meet state quotas for cotton production³⁸ and forced over two million adults and schoolchildren, mainly ages 15-17 but some even younger, to harvest cotton for up to two months each autumn,³⁹ and to plant and weed in the spring and summer, under draconian conditions; disrupting the provision of essential health, education, and other services and violating international labor laws.⁴⁰ **The Uzbek government's forced labor system also creates risk of legal liability and breaches of the UN Principles on Business and Human Rights for multinational companies investing in the country.**⁴¹

Additionally, many Uzbek citizens risk politically-motivated charges to expose the harsh realities of **the government's forced labor system and document other human rights abuses. For this, some of them, like Elena Urlaeva or Aman Sagidullaev, are routinely harassed, detained, imprisoned, and ill-treated in custody.**⁴²

³⁶ "World Report 2015: Uzbekistan," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

³⁷ "Uzbekistan: Brutal Police Attack On Activist. Attack Highlights Urgent Need for UN Monitor," Human Rights Watch, June 4, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/04/uzbekistan-brutal-police-attack-activist>.

³⁸ Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights, "The Government's Riches, the People's Burden: Human Rights Violations in Uzbekistan's 2014 Cotton Harvest," April 2015, http://uzbekgermanforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/cotton_harvest_Online.pdf.

³⁹ "Human Rights Watch Testimony at Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Corruption, Global Magnitsky, and Modern Slavery," Human Rights Watch, July 16, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/16/human-rights-watch-testimony-senate-foreign-relations-committee-corruption-global>.

⁴⁰ "HRW Briefing Memorandum Submitted to Ban Ki-moon Regarding the UN Secretary-General's Trip to Central Asia," Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/hrw-briefing-memorandum-submitted-ban-ki-moon>.

⁴¹ "Joint Letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon," Human Rights Watch, June 5, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/05/joint-letter-un-secretary-general-ban-ki-moon#_edn5.

⁴² "At Your Own Risk: Reprisals against Critics of World Bank Group Projects," Human Rights Watch, June 2015, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/worldbank0615_4up.pdf, p. 109.

Following international pressure, the government reduced the numbers of young children sent to harvest cotton in 2014, as it had done in 2013, but increased the use of older children and adults. The forced labor of adults disrupts the delivery of essential services nationwide, as authorities mobilize public sector workers—including doctors, nurses, and teachers—to fill quotas.⁴³ In February 2014, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported the findings of its mission to monitor child labor during the 2013 cotton harvest. While finding that the practice was not “systematic,” the report noted the use of child labor, and emphasized concerns about the use of forced labor, which it recommended the government take steps to eliminate.⁴⁴ During the spring of 2015, the Uzbek-German forum on Human Rights documented the forced labor of children, teachers, nurses, and other public sector workers to weed and work in the cotton sector.⁴⁵

The World Bank Group should:

- Articulate the systemic usage of forced labor, including children, in the agricultural sector as a significant challenge to sustainable development in the SCD. This should include a detailed analysis of government-mandated pricing of raw cotton below production costs, the development impact of the forced labor of children, teachers, nurses, and other public sector workers in the cotton sector; and the lack of minimum wages for field work sufficiently high to attract voluntary labor.⁴⁶
- Analyze and emphasize the need for reform in Uzbekistan’s cotton sector in the SCD, including reporting state expenditures and income from the cotton sector to the Uzbek Supreme Assembly, ending the reallocation of land as a penalty against farmers who do not fulfill cotton quotas, replacing quotas with incentives, and de-monopolizing agricultural suppliers and processors.⁴⁷
- Ensure that community members and independent groups can monitor forced labor and other rights issues in Bank-financed project areas; and take steps to ensure that individuals and groups can participate in the SCD consultation without fear of reprisal.⁴⁸
- Note in the SCD that the government has not ratified and applied ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize;⁴⁹ and has not applied ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor, including by ceasing state coercion and prosecuting anyone who forces others to work, implementing an action plan in collaboration with the ILO, and permitting unfettered access for the ILO to monitor core labor standards in

⁴³ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

⁴⁴ “World Report 2015: Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

⁴⁵ Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF), “Uzbek Government Continues Forced Labor System to Weed Cotton Fields,” June 1, 2015, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/uzbek-government-continues-forced-labor-system-to-weed-cotton-fields/> (accessed August 27, 2015).

⁴⁶ “Joint Letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,” Human Rights Watch, June 5, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/05/joint-letter-un-secretary-general-ban-ki-moon#_edn5.

⁴⁷ “Joint Letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,” Human Rights Watch, June 5, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/05/joint-letter-un-secretary-general-ban-ki-moon#_edn5.

⁴⁸ “At Your Own Risk: Reprisals against Critics of World Bank Group Projects,” Human Rights Watch, June 2015, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/worldbank0615_4up.pdf, p. 112.

⁴⁹ “World Bank: No Probe of Link to Abuses in Uzbekistan,” Human Rights Watch news release, February 2, 2015, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/02/world-bank-no-probe-link-abuses-uzbekistan>.

the agriculture sector with the participation of the International Trade Union Confederation and International Organisation of Employers.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ "Joint Letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon," Human Rights Watch, June 5, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/05/joint-letter-un-secretary-general-ban-ki-moon#_edn5.