

June 9, 2015

His Excellency Mr. Botirjon ASADOV  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Korea  
R. 702, Diplomatic Center,  
Nabusunhwan-ro 2558, Seocho-Gu,  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Dear Mr. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary:

We write to request urgent action from the Uzbek government to bring justice to the perpetrators of the abuse of human rights activist Ms. Elena Urlaeva on 31 May 2015.

On 31 May 2015, Ms. Urlaeva documented the Uzbek government's forced mobilization of teachers and doctors to clear weeds from cotton fields near the city of Chinaz in Tashkent region. Kindergarten teachers told her that the mayor had ordered the schools to send them to weed the fields. Ms. Urlaeva also photographed 60 physicians pressed into work in the cotton fields by representatives of the city hall.

Police then arrested Ms. Urlaeva, injected her with unknown sedatives, and, led by the First Deputy Chief of the local Police Department, interrogated her for 18 hours. During the interrogation, the police struck her in the head. While the police held her, doctors probed Ms. Urlaeva in the vagina and anus until she bled, and took X-rays, after accusing her of hiding a data chip. She was denied access to a toilet, ordered to relieve herself outside, and photographed nude. The police threatened more physical violence and confiscated her camera, notebook and information sheet of ILO conventions.

The abuse of Ms. Urlaeva demands urgent action from the Uzbek government to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice and from the international community to demonstrate strong support for Uzbek rights monitors and intolerance of any violence against human rights activists. KTNC Watch urges to government of Uzbekistan to:

1. Conduct a transparent investigation of the assault, bring to justice the public officials responsible for the brutalization of Elena Urlaeva;
2. Issue a public statement that: 1) independent human rights organizations, activists and journalists have the right to investigate and report on conditions in the cotton production sector without facing retaliation and 2) any police or officials who assault or detain monitors will be prosecuted;
3. Ensure independent monitors access to the cotton field for the monitoring of the condition of the cotton production.

We believe your commitment to justice can motivate the government of Uzbekistan to ensure the secure and reliable society and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

KTNC Watch

Advocates for Public Interest Law

Catholic Human Rights Committee

Corporate for All

Committee of Labor at MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society

Committee of International Solidarity at MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society

Gonggam Human Rights Law Foundation

Gyeongsan Migrant Labor Center

Humanrights Education Center Deul

Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea

SARANGBANG Group for Human Rights

Tji Haksoon Justice & Peace Foundation

Korean Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy

Korean Confederation of Trade Unions

Korean Contingent Workers' Center

Korean House for International Solidarity

Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights

Korean Women's Association United

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy