Teachers in Uzbekistan were driven to weed cotton

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CA-NEWS (UZ) - Despite ongoing appeals by international organizations opposed to forced labor in Uzbekistan, and this year the workers of budgetary organizations have mobilized for spring agricultural work.

According to data from the Uzbek service of Radio Liberty (Ozodlik), in Jizzakh, Samarkand and Kashkadarya regions of Uzbekistan teachers of schools and colleges, as well as employees of medical institutions from early May mobilized for agricultural work.

The teacher of a school in the area Kattakurgan rayona Samarkandskoy said on condition of anonymity: "The Kattakurgan district of Samarkand region on 5 May school staff bring to the weeding hlopkana field. Also forced to go to the field workers of special educational institutions. At the same time warned that fired for refusing to work".

The same situation is observed in other regions of Uzbekistan.

In the cotton fields of Jizzakh region day and night continued weeding cotton. *Students are not sent to the field, but each school must go to 15 people. Therefore, teachers are forced to go to work in the field, having abandoned all things in school," - said the teacher from Jizzakh.

Representatives of the regional department of education did not refute the information and involvement of teachers in the agricultural work. However, according to them, no orders from above on attracting teachers to weeding have been reported.

"There is no order there. In remote areas, may by mutual agreement the teachers bring to the field work. But we no orders about involvement of teachers in the agricultural work have been reported," - said the representative of the Office of Public Education of Jizzakh region.

In the same area Chirakchinskom Kashkadarya region, along with the teachers involved in the field work in the voluntary-compulsory order and health workers.

"Now we are 10 people go on field work 5 days. It is voluntary-compulsory. The authorities said that willingly, but you know that we have a voluntary things," - said the first children's hospital in Chirakchi.

In Uzbekistan, before there was the attraction of public sector employees in the agricultural work in addition to the cotton harvest in the fall.

Despite claims by the government of Uzbekistan to ban forced labor of children, there is involvement of pupils and students, along with government employees to work in the fields during the learning process.

But this year is no posts to withdraw pupils for field work.

The head of the Alliance of Human Rights Defenders Urlaeva said that watching the situation closely.

"Weeding is just beginning. At first, the employees involved in the budgetary organizations. Pupils and students also will not go away. But so far this year to attract students to the field of work is not observed," - said Elena Urlaeva.

Human rights defenders, in particular Urlaeva say that the main factor in attracting employees of budget organizations to forced labor is the desire of the government of Uzbekistan to get a cheap cotton crop.

"While in Uzbekistan will be held fully reform of agriculture and the farmers will not freely hire labor, the problem of forced labor will continue," - said Elena Urlaeva.

Now more than 130 companies in the world refuses to buy Uzbek cotton because of the attraction to his collection of child labor.

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