



June 19, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write today in support of the U.S. Department of State's decision to place Uzbekistan in Tier 3 in the *2013 Global Trafficking in Persons Report*. We appreciate the efforts of officials from the offices of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights and the Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Bureaus of Human Rights and South and Central Asian Affairs, and the U.S. embassy in Tashkent for their efforts to persuade Uzbekistan's government to eliminate the scourge of forced and child labor in the cotton sector.

While many governments fail to effectively curb human trafficking, the Uzbek government organizes, orchestrates and benefits from forced labor on a massive scale. The State Department's decision to downgrade Uzbekistan to Tier 3 is well-justified and an important step in international efforts to persuade the government in Tashkent to change its practices.

While these efforts have had some effect, more pressure is still needed. At a minimum, Tashkent must invite a high-level International Labour Organization tripartite observer mission to monitor this fall's harvest and begin to work with the ILO to address the use of forced labor in the cotton sector.

If Tashkent fails to invite the ILO prior to the fall harvest, the State Department should examine options for applying sanctions available under the TVPA for Tier 3 countries, including travel restrictions for Uzbek officials involved in the forced labor system and utilizing votes at the World Bank and other international financial institutions. In light of increased participation of private-sector employees who are Uzbek nationals in the state-sponsored forced labor system in recent years, we urge U.S. officials to stress to American companies operating in Uzbekistan the importance of fulfilling their due diligence requirements with respect to human rights.

For our part, the corporations, unions, industry associations, investors, trade unions and NGOs that form the Cotton Campaign will continue efforts to raise corporate, public, governmental and international awareness of the problem and press the Uzbek authorities to move beyond public denials and end their annual mass mobilization of forced labor for the cotton harvest.

Sincerely,

The Cotton Campaign:

Advocates for Public Interest Law

Aeropostale



American Apparel and Footwear Association



American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



American Federation of Teachers



Anti-Slavery International



Aquinas Associates



Awareness Projects.org



Association for Human Rights in Central Asia



Boston Common Asset Management



BOSTON COMMON
ASSET MANAGEMENT, LLC

Calvert



Catholic Health East



Center for Reflection, Education and Action



The Child Labor Coalition



Dignity Health



Dominican Sisters of Hope



Eileen Fisher

EILEEN
FISHER

European Center on Constitutional and Human Rights



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

Eurasian Transition Group



The Expert Working Group

EXPERT WORKING GROUP
ЭКСПЕРТНАЯ РАБОЧАЯ
ГРУППА

Fifth & Pacific



Freedom House



Human Rights Watch



INKOTA-netzwerk e.V.



International Labor Rights Forum



Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union



Marianists International



Mercy Investment Services, Inc.



National Consumers League



National Retail Federation



Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment



Open Society Foundations



Pax World Mutual Funds



Region VI Coalition for Responsible Investment



Responsible Sourcing Network



Retail Industry Leaders Association



Sisters of Charity, BVM



Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati



Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



Solidarity Center



Stop the Traffik Australia



Sunshine Coalition



Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania



United States Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel



Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, U.S. Province



Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights



Walden Asset Management



Walk Free



cc: Seth D. Harris, Acting Secretary, Deputy Secretary of Labor
William J. Burns, Deputy Secretary of State
Robert O. Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs
Uzra Zeya, Acting Assistant Secretary, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
George Krol, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan
Luis CdeBaca, Ambassador-at-Large, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons