

In 2011, Uzbekistan made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Although the Government created an Interagency Working Group to combat child labor, it failed to enforce legislation prohibiting the worst forms of child labor in the production of cotton. Authorities again closed schools and mobilized children to work in the annual autumn cotton harvest to meet Government-mandated harvest quotas.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	4.3 (244,095)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	84.1
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	5.0
Primary Completion Rate		92.9

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2006.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Uzbekistan are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, primarily in the annual cotton harvest.(3) Each spring, during the pre-harvest season, children work long hours sowing cotton(4, 5) followed by weeding through the summer months.(6) During the autumn harvest, children, estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands, continue to be forced to work due to a governmental system that requires local administrators and farmers to meet cotton harvest quotas.(3-5, 7-12) In 2011, local administrators in some regions, including the Ferghana Valley, made a special effort to keep students in school and out of the fields during the harvest.(3, 13, 14) However, in many regions, local officials continued to close schools for four to eight weeks during the harvest and forced children to pick cotton to reach the mandated quotas.(3, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16) Some reports indicate that university students and students in higher grades are sent to the fields first, with younger primary school students sent to harvest cotton later as labor demands increase. Reports indicate that children as young as age 10 are eventually forced into the fields.(7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16-19)

While sowing and harvesting cotton, some children do not have access to sufficient food and clean drinking



water.(4, 5, 7, 8, 17) Children may resort to drinking water from irrigation drainage canals, which sometimes results in intestinal and respiratory infections, meningitis or hepatitis.(4, 7, 20, 21) In addition, children are paid little if at all, and may have their wages withheld.(3, 4, 10, 17) They work long hours, carrying heavy loads, in extreme temperatures and some suffer from heatstroke.(4, 7, 8, 12, 17) Children forced to work in cotton miss weeks of school every year, which may negatively impact their learning.(3, 7) Students who refuse to participate in the cotton harvest risk receiving low grades or expulsion, and parents who complain may be threatened with or assessed fines.(3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 20, 22)

Children have been reported to be working in the cultivation of silkworms, although the extent of the problem is unknown.(4, 23, 24) Harvesting silkworm cocoons requires children to gather mulberry leaves to feed the worms at strict intervals seven times a day, working between 4 a.m. and midnight, which causes them to miss school and sleep.(23, 24) This activity may constitute forced labor as reports indicate that in previous years silk production has been driven by government quotas similar to those imposed for cotton.(4, 23, 24)

Children have been found working on the streets, although the extent of the problem is unknown.(5, 25) These children may be vulnerable to severe weather, traffic accidents and crime.(26)

There are reports that children are trafficked internally and abroad, primarily to destinations across Asia for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.(9, 27)

Uzbekistan

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code of Uzbekistan and the Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child, as amended in 2009, establish the minimum age for work at 16 and the minimum age for part-time light work at 15.(5, 28, 29) The Labor Code also prohibits hazardous labor for minors.(7)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	18
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Decree on Adoption of the List of Occupations with Unfavorable Working Conditions to Which it is Forbidden to Employ Persons under Eighteen Years of Age presents a list of hazardous activities forbidden for children younger than age 18.(5, 7, 30) This list specifically includes the manual harvesting of cotton. The Decree on Approval of Provision on Requirements on Prohibition of Use of Minors' Labor further bars employers from using children to work under a list of hazardous conditions. These include: working underground, underwater, at dangerous heights, with dangerous equipment, or doing work that requires lifting or moving heavy loads.(5, 31) This decree also grants authority to parents and labor inspectors to cancel the employment contracts of workers younger than age 18 if the work involved could endanger the child's health or well-being.(31)

The Constitution and the Labor Code prohibit forced labor,(7, 32) and the Criminal Code states that the forceful deprivation of liberty is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.(33) The Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child prohibits the prostitution, trafficking,

and use of children for illicit activities.(29) The Criminal Code penalizes commercial sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution and pornography.(33) The 2008 Law on Trafficking and the Criminal Code prohibit human trafficking.(33, 34)

On March 26, 2012, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the Decree on Additional Measures for Implementation in 2012-2013 of ILO Convention 29 on Forced or Obligatory Labor, and ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The Decree requires the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOL) to monitor cotton fields each year from August to October to ensure that children are not working.(35) Given prior government statistics on State Labor Inspection visits, it is not clear how the Decree alters the duties of the MOL.

According to the Law on Education, children have the right to free and compulsory education for 12 years, generally completed from ages 6 to 18. (25, 36) However, as noted above, in practice, many schools are closed for weeks or months during the annual cotton harvest, depriving children of this right.

Men are required to serve for 1 year in the military, with compulsory conscription at age 18.(37)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

In March 2011, the Government established a tripartite Interagency Working Group (IWG), led by the MOL, to serve as a coordinating mechanism to address labor relations issues, including child labor.(13, 16, 38) Objectives of the IWG include reporting to the ILO on the Government's implementation of ratified conventions, preventing forced labor and protecting working minors.(13, 16, 38) Activities of the IWG, as detailed in their 2011 work plan, include a focus on the preparation of reports to the ILO including an inventory of relevant legislation and development of a draft Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution to introduce changes to legislation in accordance with ILO convention requirements. The IWG work plan also included training government and business representatives on labor law and protection of workers as well as disseminating labor law information to the public.(38)

The Government's Interagency Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons is charged with overseeing efforts to combat trafficking. The Prosecutor General chairs the Commission, with representatives from other government

entities such as the Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Interior (MOI), Foreign Affairs, the National Security Service and the State Customs Committee.(27)

The MOL is responsible for carrying out labor inspections, including inspections for compliance with child labor laws.(5, 13) There is no recent publicly available information regarding the number of MOL labor inspectors across the country, or the number of annual inspections.(5, 13) The Government did not publish inspection data, but reported that no violations of child labor laws were found in 2010.(13) In 2011, the Government did not investigate, prosecute, or convict officials complicit in forced child labor during the cotton harvest.(27)

In contrast to previous years, UNICEF was allowed to observe the 2011 cotton harvest. However, UNICEF's limited observations were not designed to substitute for a comprehensive and systematic monitoring of the harvest. UNICEF has not made their findings available to the public.(3, 13, 14, 39, 40) The Government again refused to allow a high-level ILO tripartite mission to monitor forced child labor during the cotton harvest.(3, 7, 14, 17, 40)

The Prosecutor General's Office and the MOI are responsible for investigating and prosecuting criminal violations of worst forms of child labor laws, including trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(5, 13, 27) The MOI's Office for Combating Trafficking is charged with investigating crimes related to trafficking in persons, which may then be prosecuted by the Prosecutor General's office.(27) In 2011, the Government identified 76 child trafficking victims.(27) Although the Government investigated 951 criminal trafficking cases and prosecuted 444 cases that resulted in 417 convictions, data on trafficking cases were not disaggregated to indicate how many of those cases involved the trafficking of children.(27)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government's central policy on the worst forms of child labor and minimum working age was the National Action Plan for the Application of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 (NAP), adopted in 2008,(5, 7) which included a comprehensive set of activities to be undertaken through 2010.(41, 42) Research did not indicate that any NAP objectives were achieved.(5) The IWG was mandated to develop a new 2011 National Action Plan for Conventions 138 and 182, which was further elaborated in the March 2012 Decree.(27, 35, 38)

In March 2011, the Government approved a new plan for programs to address trafficking, replacing the National Action Plan to Increase the Effectiveness of Combating Trafficking in Persons that expired in 2010.(27, 41, 42) The plan established regional commissions to combat trafficking.(27)

The Government has other child-focused policies including the National Plan of Action on the Well-Being of Children 2007-2011, and the National Program on Improving Quality and Efficiency of Education 2008-2012.(41) The question of whether these policies have had an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

As part of the National Action Plan to Increase the Effectiveness of Combating Trafficking in Persons, the Government supports a shelter in Tashkent for trafficking victims, including children.(9, 27) The shelter provides medical, psychological, legal and other support services. The Government also supported an extensive awareness-raising campaign, which included programming targeting youth and trainings on trafficking issues.(27) The Government conducted a survey to gauge the public knowledge of trafficking risks and used the results to set new anti-trafficking goals.(27) Details were not available regarding the inclusion of child trafficking in the survey or awareness raising campaigns. The Government runs hotlines to report incidents of human trafficking.(27)

The Government of Uzbekistan, however, has not made efforts to implement other programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, especially for children forced to work in agriculture. The Government has not conducted research or made information available regarding forced child labor in the harvesting of cotton or silkworms.

The Government provides social protection programs such as family and child allowances.(43-46) The Government participates in a number of educational, health and livelihood programs implemented by international organizations.(44, 47, 48) The question of whether these programs have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

Uzbekistan

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Uzbekistan:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Strictly enforce legislation that prohibits children's forced involvement in the cotton harvest.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Invite the ILO or other credible third parties to systematically monitor cotton harvests.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Publish information on the number of labor inspectors and annual inspections.	2011
	Publish information on criminal investigations and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor and trafficking of children. Disaggregate data on trafficking statistics related to children.	2011
	Target labor and criminal inspections in areas where hazardous child labor is known to occur, especially in the agriculture sector.	2011
Policies	Cease the practice of closing schools and mobilizing children to work in the cotton harvest.	2011
	Assess the impact that existing child and education policies may have on addressing child labor, particularly in the agriculture sector.	2010, 2011
Social Programs	Expand programs to address the worst forms of child labor, with a particular focus on agriculture.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Conduct research on the prevalence and hazards of forced or exploitative child labor in the cultivation of cotton and silk worm.	2010, 2011
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing child labor.	2011

REFERENCES

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total.; April 26, 2012; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.
- UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. February 2, 2012. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children's work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.
- ILO Committee of Experts. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. In: International Labour Conference, 101st Session 2012; http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_174843.pdf.
- International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), Human Rights Defenders in Uzbekistan. *Forced Child Labor in Uzbekistan's 2008 Spring Agricultural Season*. Washington, D.C., October 10, 2008. <http://www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/publications-and-resources/Child%20Labor%20in%20Uzbekistan%20Spring%202008.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of State. Uzbekistan. In: *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2011*. Washington, DC; May 24, 2012; http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186481.
- IWPR. "Child Labour Persists in Uzbek Cotton Industry." Turkish Weekly, Ankara, September 24, 2011. <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/124002/child-labour-persists-in-uzbek-cotton-industry.html>.
- ILO Committee of Experts. Individual Observation concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Uzbekistan (ratification: 2008) Published: 2011; January 25, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?hst=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=12724&chapter=6&query=Uzbekistan%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool>.
- University of London- School of Oriental and African Studies. *What Has Changed? Progress in eliminating the use of forced labour in the cotton harvests of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan*. London, November 2010. <http://www.soas.ac.uk/ccac/centres-publications/file64329.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of State. Uzbekistan. In: *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2011*. Washington, DC; June 27, 2011; <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164458.pdf>.
- Uzbek German Forum for Human Rights. *Forced Child Labor During the Cotton Harvest in Uzbekistan: Monitoring Results for the Period from September to November 2011, Submitted for the Uzbekistan review by the Committee on the Rights of the Child*. Berlin, March 2012.
- Grenoble Ecole de Management Centre d'Etudes en Géopolitique et Gouvernance. *Forced Child Labour in Uzbekistan: Some Changes - but not for the Better*. Grenoble; March 2012.

12. ILO Committee on the Application of Standards. *Follow-up to the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards (International Labour Conference, 100th Session, June 2011)*; 2012. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0:NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:2700710.
13. U.S. Embassy- Tashkent. *reporting, January 4, 2012*.
14. U.S. Embassy- Tashkent. *reporting, October 19, 2011*.
15. Uzbek German Forum. *A Chronicle of Forced Child Labour: Reports from the Uzbekistan Cotton Harvest 2011, Issue 9*. Berlin, November 22, 2011. <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/2011/11/23/issue-9-november-22-2011-final-issue/>.
16. ILO Committee of Experts. Examination of individual case concerning Convention No. 182: Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 Uzbekistan (ratification: 2008) Published: 2011; February 21, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=902&chapter=13&query=Uzbekistan%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool>.
17. Human Rights Watch. *Country Summary: Uzbekistan*, [online] January 2012 [cited January 26, 2012]; http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/uzbekistan_2012.pdf.
18. Uzbek German Forum. *A Chronicle of Forced Child Labour: Reports from the Uzbekistan Cotton Harvest 2011, Issue 1*. Berlin, September 14, 2011. <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/2011/09/14/issue-1-september-2011/>.
19. Uzbek German Forum. *A Chronicle of Forced Child Labour: Reports from the Uzbekistan Cotton Harvest 2011, Issue 3*. Berlin, September 26, 2011. <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/2011/09/27/issue-3-september-26-2011/>.
20. IWPR- Central Asia Human Rights Reporting Project. "Uzbek Child Labour Rebranded as 'Voluntary'." iwpr.net [online] August 4, 2010 [cited January 30, 2012]; <http://iwpr.net/report-news/uzbek-child-labour-rebranded-voluntary>.
21. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). "Employers and Unions unite at world forum to condemn 'worst form' of child labor in Uzbekistan." ituc-csi.org [online] June 10, 2011 [cited March 16, 2012]; <http://www.ituc-csi.org/employers-and-unions-unite-at.html>.
22. Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty. "Uzbek Students 'Regularly' Expelled For Not Picking Cotton." www.rferl.org [online] December 6, 2009 [cited January 30, 2012]; http://www.rferl.org/content/Uzbek_Students_Expelled_For_Not_Picking_Cotton/1896518.html.
23. Central Asia Economy Newswire. "Uzbek children breed silkworms despite child labor ban." centralasianewswire.com [online] September 6, 2010 [cited February 21, 2012]; <http://centralasianewswire.com/Business/Uzbek-children-breed-silkworms-despite-child-labor-ban/viewstory.aspx?id=1614>.
24. Mirovalev M. "Smooth as silk? Not for Uzbekistan farm kids" *washingtontimes.com* [online] September 9, 2010 [cited March 16, 2012]; <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/sep/9/smooth-as-silk-not-for-farm-kids/?page=all>.
25. ILO Committee of Experts. Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Uzbekistan (ratification: 2008) Submitted: 2011; February 21, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/iloquery.htm>.
26. International Labour Office. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, What we need to do*. Geneva, International Labour Organization; 2011. While country-specific information on the dangers children face in street work is not available, research studies and other reports have documented the dangerous nature of tasks in street work and their accompanying occupational exposures, injuries and potential health consequences to children working in the sector.
27. U.S. Embassy- Tashkent. *reporting, March 13, 2012*.
28. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Law No. ZRU-239 to amend the Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Law on Child's Rights Guarantees*, UZB-2009-L-85547, (2009); http://www.oit.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_isn=85547.
29. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Law No. ZRU-139 on Child's Rights Guarantees*, UZB-2008-L-85548, (2008); http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_isn=85548.
30. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Decree on Adoption of the List of Occupations with Unfavorable Working Conditions to which it is forbidden to Employ Persons under Eighteen Years of Age*, (2009);
31. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Decree on Approval of Provision on Requirements on Prohibition of Use of Minors' Labor*, (2010);
32. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, (1992); <http://www.umid.uz/Main/Uzbekistan/Constitution/constitution.html>.
33. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, (1994); http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher/NATLEGBOD_UZ_B_3ae6b59216.0.html.
34. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Law on Combating Trafficking in Humans*, (2008); <http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/uploads/Uzbekistan%20-%20Law%20on%20combating%20trafficking%20in%20human%20beings%202008%20eng.pdf>.
35. Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Decree On additional measures for Implementation in 2012-2013 of ILO Convention #29 on Forced or Obligatory Labor and ILO Convention #182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, No. 82, (March 26, 2012); http://lex.uz/Pages/GetAct.aspx?lact_id=1986839.
36. U.S. Department of State. Uzbekistan. In: *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*. Washington, DC; April 8, 2011; <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160482.pdf>.
37. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Uzbekistan. In: *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*. London; 2008; http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/files/country_pdfs/FINAL_2008_Global_Report.pdf.
38. Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan- Washington official. Written communication to. U.S. Department of State official. April 13, 2011.
39. Fitzpatrick CA. "Uzbekistan: UNICEF Circumspect about Child Labor." *eurasianet.org* [online] January 11, 2012 [cited February 2, 2012]; <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64822>.
40. Uzbek German Forum. *A Chronicle of Forced Child Labour: Reports from the Uzbekistan Cotton Harvest 2011, Issue 4*. Berlin, October 3, 2011. <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/2011/10/04/issue-4-october-3-2011/>.
41. ILO Committee of Experts. Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Uzbekistan (ratification: 2008) Submitted: 2010; February 21, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/iloquery.htm>.
42. U.S. Embassy- Tashkent. *reporting, February 23, 2011*.
43. International Monetary Fund. *Republic of Uzbekistan: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*. Washington, D.C.; 2008. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2008/cr0834.pdf.
44. The World Bank. *World Bank – Uzbekistan Partnership Program Snapshot*. Washington, DC; August 2011. <http://bit.ly/zMY7tK>.
45. Azizov D. "Pensions and wages increased by 15 percent in Uzbekistan." *trend.az* [online] August 1, 2011 [cited March 19, 2012]; <http://en.trend.az/capital/business/1912555.html>.
46. U.S. Social Security Administration. *Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Asia and the Pacific, 2010: Uzbekistan*. Washington, D.C.; 2010. <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/prodesc/ssptw/2010-2011/asia/uzbekistan.html>.
47. UNDP. *Health for All: A Key Goal for Uzbekistan in the New Millennium*. Tashkent; 2006. http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/eurothecis/uzbekistan/UZBEKISTAN_2006_en.pdf.
48. UNDP Uzbekistan. *Projects Database*, [online] [cited March 19, 2012]; http://www.undp.uz/en/projects/?project_status=1.