

Uzbekistan: Defend human rights activist Uktam Pardaev

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Campaign in partnership with the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), International Labor Rights Forum and the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia - AHRCA.

As an essential strategy to sustain its massive use of forced labour, the government of Uzbekistan harasses, arrests, detains, and in some cases tortures citizens who attempt to document it. Uktam Pardaev, a human rights activist from Jizzakh and member of an independent cotton harvest monitoring group, was arrested on 16 November 2015 on trumped up charges of fraud, taking a bribe, and insult. Pardaev was held for eight weeks in pre-trial detention. In detention officials kept him in a damp, cold cell with only a dirty mat to sleep on, and little food. Pardaev witnessed officials torturing and mistreating detainees to coerce confessions. Pardaev was pressured to confess and beaten severely on one occasion.

Human rights organizations worldwide, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, demanded the immediate release of Uktam Pardaev. On 11 January 2016, he was sentenced to three years' probation, under which he lives at his home under constant surveillance by security services, which also heavily restrict his movements and activities. Officials also continue to harass Uktam Pardaev's relatives and friends, who have been watched, questioned and threatened.

The Letter

As a member of the United Nations, the government of Uzbekistan has a duty to protect human rights defenders and ensure they can carry out their legitimate activities free of harassment and without fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I call on you to immediately quash the conviction against human rights defender Uktam Pardaev; conduct a prompt, independent, effective, and impartial investigation into his credible allegations of ill-treatment by prison officials, cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions of detention, and violations of due process, and bring those responsible to justice. I also call on you to allow independent journalists, human rights defenders, and other individuals and organizations to document and report human rights concerns without fear of reprisals and in accordance with Uzbekistan's commitments under international law.

P.S.

* https://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign.cgi?c=3033