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**Anti-Slavery International, Alternative Turkmenistan News and  
the Cotton Campaign Pre-sessional Briefing to the Country  
Report Task Force on Turkmenistan**

**117<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Committee, Geneva  
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**Introduction**

Anti-Slavery International, Alternative Turkmenistan News and the Cotton Campaign welcome the upcoming review of Turkmenistan's second periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee (the Committee).

This report provides information on state-sponsored forced labour in the cotton sector, focusing on Article 8 of the ICCPR. We hope it will inform the Committee's pre-sessional review of Turkmenistan and that the areas of concern highlighted here will be reflected in the list of issues submitted to the Turkmen government ahead of the review.

**Authors of the report**

Anti-Slavery International was set up in 1839 and is the oldest international human rights organisation in the world. Today Anti-Slavery International works to eradicate all contemporary forms of slavery, including bonded labour, forced labour, trafficking in human beings, descent based slavery, the worst forms of child labour, and forced marriage.

Alternative Turkmen News (ATN) is a civil media initiative founded in 2010 to report news from Turkmenistan and monitor human rights violations. In the past three years, ATN has focused on covering forced labour during the cotton harvest campaign, the state of Turkmen prisons, border security, and development in the oil and gas industry.

The Cotton Campaign is a global coalition of human rights, labour, investor and business organizations dedicated to eradicating child labour and forced labour in cotton production. Anti-Slavery International and ATN are members of the Cotton Campaign.

**Methodology**

The evidence in this report was collected by a network of informants in all four cotton-growing provinces of Turkmenistan. Turkmen government officials, farmers, rural residents, public-sector workers and businessmen provided first-hand accounts, documentary evidence and photographs to the Alternative Turkmenistan News (ATN). Due to extreme limitations on freedom of expression in Turkmenistan, these informants provided this evidence at great personal risk, and ATN does not disclose their identities.

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### **Executive Summary**

The cotton industry in Turkmenistan is underpinned by state-sponsored forced labour. The government maintains total control of cotton production and forces farmers to deliver state-established, annual cotton production quotas under threat of penalty including loss of their land. Each year during the cotton harvest, the Government forces tens of thousands of public sector workers including teachers, doctors, nurses and staff working in government offices to pick cotton, pay a bribe, or hire a replacement worker to pick cotton under threat of punishment including loss of wages and termination of employment. Officials also force private businesses to contribute workers, or contribute financially or in-kind, under threat of closing the business.

The forced mobilisation of farmers, public- and private-sector workers to produce and pick cotton violates national laws prohibiting forced labour, including Article 8 of the Labour Code. The practice is a clear violation of Article 8 of the ICCPR.

In 2016, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (the ILO Committee of Experts) noted with “*deep concern* the widespread use of forced labour in cotton production which affects farmers, businesses and private and public sector workers, including teachers, doctors and nurses, under threat of losing their jobs, salary cuts, loss of land and extraordinary investigations”. The Committee recalled that, for the purposes of Conventions No. 29 and No. 105, the terms “forced or compulsory labour” are defined as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. It stated that, in this context, voluntary offer refers to the

freely given and informed consent of workers to enter into an employment relationship, as well as their freedom to leave their employment at any time, without fear of retaliation or loss of any privilege. Further, that "...while temporary transfers of employment might be inherent to certain professions and activities, the Committee considers that the application in practice of provisions, orders or regulations allowing for the systematic transfer of workers for the performance of activities which are unrelated to their ordinary occupations (for example, the transfer of a health-care professional to perform agricultural work) should be carefully examined in order to ensure that such practice would not result in a contractual relationship based on the will of the parties turning into work by compulsion of law." The Committee concluded that "although certain forms of compulsory work or service (such as work that is part of the normal civic obligations of citizens and minor communal services) are explicitly excluded from the scope of the forced labour Conventions, these exceptions do not include work with a certain quantitative significance and used for the purposes of economic development". The Committee therefore strongly urged the Government "*...to take effective measures without delay to ensure the complete elimination of the use of compulsory labour of public and private sector workers in cotton farming, and requests the Government to provide information on the specific measures taken to this end, in both law and practice, and the concrete results achieved.*"<sup>1</sup>

State-sponsored forced labour takes place in a climate of widespread human rights violations in the country. The Government is also responsible for forced disappearances; denies freedom of association, movement, expression and religion; and refuses cooperation with United Nations human rights bodies. Those who document forced labour in the cotton industry do so at great personal risk, and do so anonymously to avoid harassment and reprisals.

## **State-sponsored forced labour in Turkmenistan's cotton industry (article 8)**

### **1. A forced labour system imposed and administered by the Government**

Turkmenistan is the ninth largest producer and seventh largest exporter of cotton in the world.<sup>2</sup> The Government uses systematic and widespread coercion to produce cotton, annually forcing farmers to fulfil cotton production quotas and other citizens to fulfil cotton picking quotas. The Government uses a strict chain of command to mobilise farmers and other citizens to work in the cotton fields. The state-owned enterprise Turkmenpagta assigns annual production quotas to each farmer in the land lease contract. Farmers Associations, the local-level government agencies responsible for overseeing agricultural production, directly manage the farmers and report to the regional governors. During the cotton harvest, the President personally holds the regional governors of each cotton growing province accountable for fulfilment of their cotton harvest quota. In turn, the regional governors instruct their deputies and the heads of districts in their provinces to mobilise a specific number of cotton-pickers to the fields. They then order administrators of the regional

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<sup>1</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Individual Observation concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No.105), Turkmenistan, Published 2016

<sup>2</sup>International Cotton Advisory Committee, ICAC World Cotton Database, <https://www.icac.org>

organisations under their supervision to mobilise their staff to pick cotton, including from education, healthcare, and culture and sporting institutions, as well as manufacturing, construction and transportation companies. In each organisation, a person is appointed to organise and oversee the mobilisation of staff to the cotton fields, to document which staff pick cotton and which staff hire replacement workers, and to monitor each worker's progress towards their assigned harvest quota.

The Government uses coercion to ensure compliance with the cotton production plan. The President threatens regional governors with the loss of their positions if they fail to fulfil their regional cotton target. Regional and district-level officials threaten the heads of farmers associations with the loss of their jobs if they do not fulfil their cotton quotas. Heads of farmers associations threaten farmers with the loss of their land for failure to deliver their cotton quotas. The first time a farmer falls short of the production quota he is likely to be reprimanded, but on a subsequent occasion the likely penalty is the loss of his lease to farm the land. Cotton pickers work in the fields under threat of punishment such as loss of pay or termination of employment.

## **2. Forcible mobilisation of public and private sector workers to pick cotton**

Each year in the four cotton-growing regions (Ahal, Dashoguz, Lebap and Mary), the Turkmen government forces tens of thousands of workers from the public and private sector to pick cotton during the cotton harvest, or to pay a bribe or hire a replacement worker to pick cotton instead, under threat of punishment including public censure, loss of wages, and termination of employment. The Turkmen government treats refusal to contribute to the cotton harvest as insubordination, incitement to sabotage, lack of patriotism, and even 'contempt of the homeland.' Officials, however, are careful to not record refusal to pick cotton as the cause for termination of employment, making it impossible for workers to seek redress.

### **2015 Cotton harvest**

The 2015 cotton harvest began in late August. Due to a flood affecting one of the main cotton-growing regions, an intense drought in another of the cotton-growing provinces, and problems with irrigation systems and field defoliation elsewhere, it was a late, unusually long, and low-yield harvest. As a result, the government forced more people to pick cotton than previous years and intensified the enforcement of harvest quotas. The Government forced workers from a wide range of public and private sector institutions to pick cotton, including education, healthcare, municipal government offices, libraries, museums, meteorological agencies, cultural centres, sports organisations, and utility, manufacturing, construction, telecommunications and fishing companies. Many people hired replacement workers instead of picking cotton themselves. Administrators of public-sector institutions also offered exemptions upon payment of a bribe. The cotton harvest continued as late as December, with cotton pickers enduring freezing conditions in the fields.

The President intervened publicly a number of times during the harvest, criticising officials for the slow progress towards the national cotton production target, naming districts, and

demanding urgent action. In turn, regional governors increased pressure on district officials, public-sector administrators, and company managers to mobilise more people.

The mobilisation proceeded similarly in each region. Regional governors oversaw the district officials and administrators in the region, and administrators of public-sector institutions ordered employees to participate in the cotton harvest. Each morning, officials registered attendance, and buses were provided to transport everyone to the cotton fields from the district administration offices.

In Lebap, the Regional Governor ordered “everyone to the fields”, with the exception of pregnant women. The Regional Governor directly oversaw the harvesting in the region, personally visiting fields and meeting with the administrators of institutions in the region. Prior to the harvest he closed the Medical Advisory Committee, which is responsible for issuing medical exemptions from cotton harvesting.

The Municipal administration in Lebap closely monitored each public institution’s participation in the harvest. Officials recorded attendance as residents boarded the buses to go to the cotton fields, noting whether or not each institution had mobilised a sufficient number of cotton pickers and were fulfilling their cotton quota. One of the administrators, a school principal, reported that the municipality would reprimand an administrator after three reports of falling to mobilise enough cotton pickers or meet cotton quotas, and would fire an administrator after three more such reports.

In Magdanly district in Lebap, school administrators assigned teaching and maintenance staff quotas of 1,300 kilograms of cotton for the harvest and offered to accept fines from those unable to do the field work. Teachers reported that this practice had been common for the past few years but that this year the fine was higher. A teacher from secondary school No. 6 in Magdanly, Lebap province, said: “Last year we paid 0.70 manat (US\$0.20) per kilogram, but this year, the cotton failed and we had to pay 0.90 manat (US\$0.26) per kilogram. Based on the new rate, each of us must pay for 1170 manat (\$334) worth of cotton. The Principal is keeping a strict watch over the matter. He reminds us of the debt every single day, and threatens to withhold this amount from our salary. The closer it gets to the end of the cotton season, the more insistent are the demands to pay the cotton debt, to hand the money over. In Magdanly and other places, there have been cases when teachers or technical school staff refused to pay and quit their jobs.”

Members of the military also reported mandatory participation in the cotton harvest. Soldiers worked in the cotton fields of Dashoguz, Lebap and Mary provinces. In Lebap and Dashoguz regions, some soldiers got sick due to the lack of clean drinking water while working in the cotton fields.

Officials forcibly mobilised students under the guise of internships. The Turkmen Agricultural University and Dashoguz Agricultural Institute forced approximately 2,000 students to pick cotton under threat of expulsion. The students were sent to cotton fields in Ahal and Dashoguz regions, where both institutions own farmland. While the administrators

claimed picking cotton was an internship for the students to acquire practical skills, the students had no choice; either they picked cotton or would be expelled.

The forced mobilisation intensified towards the end of the cotton harvest, due to the late and low yield of the harvest. In Dashoguz region, an employee of the regional housing and public utility service described the mobilisation effort at the end of the harvest:

"Our boss spelled it out: he doesn't need our work at the office, so those scheduled to go must head there tomorrow. There were about 30 of us. They put us in a bus and sent us to Ruhubelent [a remote district in the Dashoguz region]. It took us almost two hours to get there. It was cold. The crowd trudged reluctantly along the patches. There was nothing to pick, only bare stems. Closer to 5 pm, it turned out that together we had gathered only about 180 kilograms. It was too little. So the monitor of our group sent a hat around, and each of us put 1-2 manat (US\$0.29 – 0.57) in. He gave the money to the local farmer, and in return got a statement saying that we supposedly harvested 600 kilograms of cotton. The statement is a plain handwritten paper signed by the farmer and the head of the local farmers association. We submitted this paper to the administration."

As a result of the mass mobilisation of public sector workers to pick cotton, many services were disrupted including education and healthcare. In each region, administrators forced teachers to harvest cotton, pay a bribe, or lose their jobs. As a consequence, from the beginning of September many classes were cancelled altogether or the school day was shortened. Teachers who remained in school had to teach courses for which they had no training, or to teach groups of 60 or more students. Access to healthcare was similarly affected by large numbers of staff from hospitals and other health-care facilities being forced to pick cotton. In Lebap region it was reported that hospitals had the bare minimum number of staff to be open, leaving long delays in treatment. Administrators of public utilities were among the first to send employees to the cotton fields. As a result, many cities had overflowing garbage containers lining the streets, and municipalities did not respond to calls for assistance. In one case, a pipe burst in an apartment building, but the municipality responded that "everyone is picking cotton."

Pressure to fulfil cotton picking quotas resulted in children picking cotton alongside their parents in at least one area, the Boldumsaz district of Dashoguz region. The parents feared losing their jobs if they did not fulfil their cotton quota, so brought their children to work alongside them in order to increase the amount of cotton they could pick, and in some cases sent their children to pick cotton for them. An employer of an oil refinery in Dashoguz reported seeing children in the cotton fields and teenagers boarding the buses that departed from the city's old sports stadium to the fields each day.

The Committee has previously expressed its concern at reports of the use of children for cotton harvesting in Turkmenistan, and urged the State party to "...**eliminate the use of children for cotton harvesting and ensure that children are protected from the harmful**

**effects of all forms of child labour.”**<sup>3</sup> In its response to the Committee’s Concluding Observations, the Government stated that “Reports about the use of child labour in the cotton harvest are neither objective nor accurate.”<sup>4</sup> In its second periodic report, the Government reports that “The State ensures the protection of children against all forms of exploitation and against arduous, harmful and hazardous work. Such provisions are enshrined in article 38 of the new version of the Children’s Right Act...”<sup>5</sup> and “Children may not be employed in agricultural and other work that excludes them from their studies during the school year”.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that as a consequence of the coercion applied by officials on individuals to meet their assigned cotton quota or face sanctions, parents have felt compelled to use their children to pick cotton in at least one district documented in 2015.

### **2014 Cotton harvest**

In 2014, from 20 August, the government first ordered rural residents to the cotton fields, followed by manual workers (such as guards and warehouse workers), and finally public sector workers from the cities. Those forced to pick cotton were ordered to report to their local municipal government office at 6am, and from there they were transported to the cotton fields in buses organised by the local authorities.

People forced to pick cotton worked ten hours in the cotton fields each day, usually from around 8am in the morning until 6pm. The daily cotton quota in 2014 was reported to be 20 to 25 kilograms of cotton per person. Most cotton pickers reported receiving the state-assigned payment of 0.20 manat (US\$0.07) per kilogram of cotton, and paying more for food than what they actually received. Conditions in the fields were reported by some to be better than in previous years, as farmers provided warm meals and drinking water. However, temperatures reached as high as 40°C in the cotton growing regions in September, making the physical work very difficult, and there were reports of people suffering heat stroke.

Administrators of public institutions enforced the quotas with the threat of punishment such as dismissal from employment, having work hours cut, or salary deductions. In 2014, teachers in every region of the country reported that they had been penalised for refusing to pick cotton; some had been dismissed from their jobs and others had their salaries or working hours cut. High unemployment levels in Turkmenistan strengthen the impact of threats of dismissal for non-participation in the cotton harvest.

In many regions, school staff (such as custodians and security guards) and teachers were mobilised to pick cotton by school administrators, under orders from the Education

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<sup>3</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee. Turkmenistan (CCPR/C/TKM/CO/1), 104<sup>th</sup> Session, New York, 19 April 2012. Paragraph 20

<sup>4</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee: Turkmenistan. Addendum. Information received from Turkmenistan on the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee (CCPR/C/TKM/CO/1/Add.1), 19 April 2012. Paragraph 76

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Committee, Second periodic report of States parties due in 2015: Turkmenistan (CCPR/C/TKM/2), 14 October 2015, Paragraph 259

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, paragraph 278

Department. In the Lebap and Mary regions, teachers of upper grade levels and school staff were required to pick cotton on two week-days and on Sunday, each week, throughout the harvest. Teachers of lower grades were generally sent to the cotton fields every other day after the end of the school day. Some schools also sent students, aged 18 and older, to pick cotton after classes each day. In the Dashoguz region, school administrators sent teachers to pick cotton several days each week. Many school administrators ordered teachers to contribute financially, apparently so that the administrator could hire workers instead of sending teachers. It was reported that payments of 10 to 20 manats (US\$3.50-7 approximately) per day were demanded by administrators.

Many government agencies also forced employees to pick cotton. Administrators of state-owned banks, factories and government agencies forced employees to sign a form indicating their awareness that they would “bear the responsibility” if they refused to pick cotton. Most organisations sent their workers in shifts.

Some public sector workers avoided picking cotton by hiring another person to fulfil their harvest quota. A few government agencies did not send any employees to pick cotton but instead required payments from their staff, purportedly so that they could hire people to pick cotton in their place. Employees reported having to pay 15 to 30 manats (US\$5-10) per day. This practice was most common among banking, healthcare, and oil and gas sectors. For example, the state-owned Dashoguz Supply Company collected money from its employees. The Dashoguz workers reported they had no idea how their money was used, but they were relieved not to pick cotton.

### **Forced mobilisation of the private sector in the cotton harvest**

The Government also forced small, medium and large businesses to contribute workers to pick cotton or to contribute financially or in-kind during the 2014 and 2015 harvests. Authorities forced the owners of small businesses such as market vendors, retail stores, cafes, beauty salons, shoe and clock repair shops, amongst others, to close their businesses and pick cotton. The business owners reportedly had to provide a form signed by the farmer as proof of their work in the cotton fields. Private bus companies were also forced to contribute by transporting forced labourers to the fields, without any compensation. Private buses were used to supplement the use of public buses which were diverted from their usual routes to take people to the fields throughout the harvest. The police confiscated the licenses of any drivers who refused to comply.

In 2014 in Tejen, Ahal region, the municipal government limited the business hours of markets and grocery stores to evenings only so that workers and residents could pick cotton during the day. This was apparently in response to the President denouncing the slow pace of cotton harvesting in the Ahal region. The authorities of Galkynysh district of Lebap region also closed the markets, and in some areas the authorities also closed pharmacies. The Turkmenabat region Deputy Governor ordered medium and large businesses to send employees to pick cotton during the first week of September. The business owners reported being threatened with extraordinary audits, tax inspections, and fire inspections if they refused to comply.



### **3. Cotton production in Turkmenistan: state control and coercion**

The Government of Turkmenistan maintains total control over the cotton sector. It owns the land and manages all financial transactions in the cotton sector.<sup>7</sup> Reporting to President Berdymuhamedov, the regional governors oversee the Farmers Associations, which manage farmers, and the local-level officials, which mobilize other citizens to harvest cotton. The state-owned company Turkmenpagta has a monopoly over cotton purchasing from farmers and cotton sales. The government does not report sales, income or allocations of income from cotton.

The government leases land to farmers for 1-5 years and dictates use of the land through Farmers Associations<sup>8</sup>. Farmers Associations may take away a farmer's right to use the land for "irrational and inappropriate use," under the law.<sup>9</sup> In practice, the Associations take away land from farmers for many reasons, including local officials' personal views on a farmer concerned.

The state-owned Turkmenpagta manages procurement and sales of cotton, and the state-owned Dayhanbank manages financial flows in the cotton sector. The bank's chairman is appointed by the President. Annually, Dayhanbank manages credit lines on behalf of Turkmenpagta and in the names of farmers. During the cotton harvest, Dayhanbank pays into farmers' accounts for cotton delivered daily, and after the harvest the bank settles each farmers' account, in December and January. However, most farmers never see the contract stipulating the procurement price and other terms. The Farmers Associations hold the cotton procurement contracts, leaving the farmers in the dark when settling their accounts.

Farmers report much more explicit exploitation throughout the annual cotton production process. State owned companies maintain monopolies over inputs. Obahyzmat is the only source for agricultural equipment, and farmers report it regularly charges for services never provided. Turkmendokun is the only source for fertilizers, and farmers report it charges them for more fertilizer than it delivers and cuts fertilizers with fillers. The state owned gins are responsible for transporting cotton from farms to gins and for weighing, grading and recording cotton delivered by the farmers. Farmers report the gin managers fail to transport the cotton yet still charge farmers for the service and then record less volume and a lower grade cotton than what the farmer delivers.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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<sup>7</sup>From 1995- 2005, the Turkmenistan government transferred plots of 3-4 hectares to private individual ownership. Yet only as much as 750 hectares were transferred; only 15 people received land ownership; and the Government stopped transfers to private ownership in 2006

<sup>8</sup>In 1995, the Government replaced Soviet-established collective farms with Farmers Associations and tenant farmers. Since, individual farmers lease land from the government, and the Farmers Associations enforce state-assigned cotton, wheat and rice quotas

<sup>9</sup>Ministry of Justice of Turkmenistan, [http://minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc\\_view.php?doc\\_id=8375](http://minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc_view.php?doc_id=8375) and [http://minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc\\_view.php?doc\\_id=14663](http://minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc_view.php?doc_id=14663) (Accessed 3 April 2015)

In view of the above, we encourage the Committee to ask the Government what measures it is taking to end forced labour in the cotton industry.

**The State party should:**

- Publicly recognise and renounce forced labour in the cotton industry.
- Take urgent action to end the practice of state-sponsored forced labour in the cotton industry. This should include enforcing national laws that prohibit forced labour, instructing officials at all levels of government to refrain from using coercion to mobilise citizens to work, and prosecuting officials found to use forced labour through fair judicial processes that conform to international standards.
- Establish and implement a national action plan to reform the cotton industry and end forced labour. This should include ceasing the use of penalties for not growing cotton or working in the cotton fields, ending mandatory cotton production and harvest quotas, and increasing and eventually freeing cotton procurement prices.

**Persecution of activists and journalists seeking to document forced labour (articles 9, 19, 22)**

Civil society activists and journalists seeking to document forced labour in the cotton harvest cannot operate openly and risk intimidation, harassment, arrest and detention. Critical media reporting is not tolerated. Self-censorship is commonplace.

In 2015, the Turkmen government intimidated many human rights monitors into silence when it arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned journalist Saparmamed Nepeskuliev. Mr Nepeskuliev is a journalist for Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty and Alternative Turkmenistan News and has reported on state corruption and human rights abuses, including forced labour in the cotton sector. On 7 July 2015, officials arrested Nepeskuliev, held him incommunicado for weeks, and sentenced him to prison. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UN WGAD) concluded that the detention of Nepeskuliev was arbitrary and in retaliation for exercising his right to freedom of expression, and expressed concern over a pattern of incommunicado detention, closed trials, lack of legal defence, torture and ill-treatment in detention facilities.<sup>10</sup>

Turkmenistan has not implemented the 2012 recommendations of the Committee following examination of its initial report to, inter alia “...ensure that journalists, human rights defenders and individuals are able to freely exercise their right to freedom of expression in accordance with the Covenant, and also allow international human rights organizations into the country. The State party should ensure that individuals have access to websites and use the Internet without undue restrictions. The Committee, therefore, urges the State party to take all necessary steps to ensure that any restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression fully comply with the strict requirements of article 19, paragraph 3, of the

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, “Opinion No. 40/2015 concerning Saparmamed Nepeskuliev (Turkmenistan),” A/HRC/WGAD/2015, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/Opinionsadoptedin2015.aspx>

Covenant as further set out in its general comment No. 34 (2011) on freedoms of opinion and expression.”<sup>11</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We encourage the Committee to ask the Government what measures it is taking to permit international and local independent organizations, activists and journalists to conduct their own monitoring of forced labour in the cotton industry without fear of reprisal.

### **The State party should:**

- Allow independent journalists, human rights defenders, and others to document and report concerns about the use of forced labour in the cotton industry without fear of reprisals.
- Investigate and hold accountable any officials responsible for reprisals against independent journalists and human rights defenders.

## **Obligation to put in place legislation prohibiting slavery, servitude and forced labour (Article 2)**

While Turkmenistan is party to the 1926 Slavery Convention, 1930 Forced Labour Convention, the 1956 Supplementary Slavery Convention, and the 1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, it does not appear that it has carried out its obligations under these instruments by promulgating effective criminal legislation addressing the prohibitions of slavery, servitude and forced labour. While it appears that Turkmenistan has a constitutional provision (Article 31) prohibiting forced labour, ‘except where envisaged by law’, it does not seem to have any further laws addressing slavery, servitude and forced labour.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We encourage the Committee to ask the Government what legislation, if any, does Turkmenistan have in place to give effect to its obligations under the four instruments just noted; and to the ICCPR Article 8, as required by Article 2(2), which mandates the adoption of “such legislation or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

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<sup>11</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee. Turkmenistan (CCPR/C/TKM/CO/1), 104<sup>th</sup> Session, New York, 19 April 2012. Paragraph 18