Published on *International Labor Rights Forum* (http://www.laborrights.org)

US: Take Tough Stance With Uzbekistan

Date of publication: September 28, 2011

Source: Press Release

Author: Human Rights Watch

Bill Would Give Military Aid to Repressive Government

(Washington, DC, September 28, 2011) – The US government should not move toward "business as usual" with Uzbekistan, a group of 20 human rights organizations, labor and consumer groups, trade unions, investors, and other organizations said today in a letter to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [1]. The letter's signatories expressed concern over proposed US legislation to permit military and other assistance to the Uzbek government, one of the most repressive in the world.

On September 21, 2011, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill that will allow taxpayer-funded military assistance to the Uzbek government. Uzbek authorities silence civil society activists, independent journalists, and all political opposition; severely curtail freedom of expression and religion; and organize forced child labor on a massive scale.

On September 28, Uzbekistan's foreign minister, Elyor Ganiyev, will be meeting with the American-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC.

"We call on you to stand behind your strong past statements regarding human rights abuses in Uzbekistan," the signatories said in their letter to Clinton. "We strongly urge you to oppose passage of the law and not to invoke this waiver."

The bill, if enacted, would allow the US government to waive restrictions on aid to the Uzbek government, including military aid, that have been in place since 2004 because of Uzbekistan's deplorable human rights record. The Obama administration and the State Department have already made it clear that they intend to provide military assistance to Uzbekistan once the legislation is enacted.

The letter [1]also called on Clinton to reiterate publicly the serious concerns the US government has regarding Uzbekistan's abysmal human rights record.

A large, diverse group signed the letter, including:
AFL-CIO
Amnesty International USA
Anti-Slavery
Association for Human Rights in Central Asia
Boston Common Asset Management, LLC
CREA
The Child Labor Coalition
CIVICUS

European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights
The Expert Working Group – Uzbekistan
First Focus Freedom House
Freedom Now
Human Rights Watch
International Crisis Group
International Labor Rights Forum
National Consumers League
Open Society Policy Center
Responsible Sourcing Network
Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on Uzbekistan, please visit:
http://www.hrw.org/en/europecentral-asia/uzbekistan [2]

Source URL: http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cotton-campaign/uzbekistan/news/us-take-tough-stance-with-uzbekistan

Links:
[1] http:// http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cotton-campaign/uzbekistan/resources/civil-society-letter-to-secretary-clint
[2] http://www.hrw.org/en/europecentral-asia/uzbekistan