

WHAT NOT TO WEAR COTTON AND CHILD SLAVERY



TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2009 AT 7PM

At **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK**, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

Uzbekistan is the third biggest exporter of cotton in the world. Its booming cotton industry generates over US\$1 billion annually, but the industry, which largely supplies the European market, is underpinned by a system of state-sponsored forced labour, particularly of children.

Schools are closed down for the duration of the cotton harvest and children, some as young as 10 years old, are sent to the fields to pick cotton by hand for little or no pay. Students who fail to meet their targets or refuse to work are reportedly punished with detentions and beatings or can face expulsion from school. Human rights groups estimate that up to 200,000 children are involved each year.

This discussion will focus on what can be done to end the use of forced labour in the cotton industry. Considering the action taken by some retailers to ban Uzbek cotton from their products, why do other retailers continue to use it? How can we as consumers ensure that the products we buy are free from slave labour and that we are not inadvertently contributing to the problem?

The short film *White Gold* made by the Environmental Justice Foundation will also be screened.



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PANEL

LUCY SIEGLE, journalist, author and presenter (chair)

JOANNA EWART-JAMES, Anti-Slavery International

JULIETTE WILLIAMS, The Environmental Justice Foundation

STEVE GRINTER, International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation



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