

I am writing this to express my grave concern for Elena Urlaeva, a human rights defender, who was detained by police officers on May 31, as she had been monitoring the use of forced labor in cotton fields. She was then kept for several hours in a local police station in Chinaz. The police confiscated her notebook and digital camera. While she was detained, she was beaten on the head, and the police demanded to know where she had hidden her camera's memory card. She was stripped naked and subjected to vaginal examinations, supposedly to find the memory card.

I urge you to order a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into her allegations of torture, sexual violence and humiliation, and bring those responsible to justice.

At the same time, I call on you to respect your obligations under international human rights law to ensure that nobody is subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

I also urge you to ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including harassment, intimidation and attacks.

Your prompt attention to the above would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,