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**CONTACT:** Patricia Jurewicz, 510.735.8145, [patricia@sourcingnetwork.org](mailto:patricia@sourcingnetwork.org)  
Andrew Montes, (510) 735-8144, [amontes@asyousow.org](mailto:amontes@asyousow.org)

## **New Report Offers Snapshot of Company Activities to Source Slave-Free Textiles**

### ***Survey Captures Industry Challenges and Best Practices in Avoiding Forced-Labor Cotton from Uzbekistan***

**OAKLAND, CA** – *Cotton Sourcing Snapshot: A Survey of Corporate Practices to End Forced Labor* was released today by [Responsible Sourcing Network \(RSN\)](#), a non-profit dedicated to ending human rights abuses associated with the raw materials found in products we use every day. The report includes survey results and ratings of 49 companies in the apparel and home goods industries that reflect what steps companies are taking to identify risks and establish procedures to prevent cotton from Uzbekistan picked with forced labor from entering their supply chains.

The survey offered a maximum of 100 points across 11 indicators in the categories of Policy, Public Disclosure, Engagement, and Implementation & Auditing. Only five companies scored over 50 points, 19 companies scored under 25 points, and two companies scored zero.

“Although almost 80% of the companies surveyed have some sort of policy against Uzbek cotton, most companies are taking little to no action to be absolutely certain the cotton in their products is not originating in Uzbekistan,” said Patricia Jurewicz, Director and Founder of RSN and co-author of the report. “Yet, there are several companies that have implemented systems that guarantee the integrity of their raw materials. All companies could easily replicate these best practices.”

The Government of Uzbekistan is notorious for forcing up to a million of its citizens to work in the cotton harvest each year. Due to mounting international and corporate pressure, the last two years have largely excluded children 6-14, who have been forced to harvest cotton in the past. However, the Uzbek government is now mobilizing even greater numbers of teenagers, university students, and adults.

The report found that only two percent of companies surveyed fully disclose progress and/or challenges with their strategies on Uzbek cotton, and only six percent have fully implemented a traceability or spinner verification program. Companies scoring highest include adidas (68 points), Marks & Spencer (63 points), and IKEA (62.5), while companies scoring no points include Urban Outfitters and All Saints.

Since 2007, RSN has been coordinating the faith-based, sustainable, and responsible investment (SRI) community to engage corporations involved in the apparel and home goods industries on the issue of forced labor in the Uzbek cotton sector. *Cotton Sourcing Snapshot* offers insight to investors on specific actions companies are taking to avoid human rights risks embedded in their products.

Several recommendations are presented to help move the industries towards greater certainty and transparency. Companies are encouraged to implement an industry-wide spinner certification program, integrate supplier compliance into their IT systems, and increase disclosure of internal practices and challenges.



RSN's Cotton Program aims to eliminate the most egregious human rights abuses at the field level of apparel supply chains. The Cotton Program has previously released two reports on Uzbek cotton, *From the Field and To the Spinner*. Currently, RSN's Cotton Pledge against forced labor in the cotton sector of Uzbekistan has garnered 141 brands and companies as signatories.

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**Responsible Sourcing Network** ([www.sourcingnetwork.org](http://www.sourcingnetwork.org)) is a project of the nonprofit organization As You Sow ([www.asyousow.org](http://www.asyousow.org)). RSN is dedicated to ending human rights abuses and forced labor associated with the raw materials found in products we use every day. RSN supports network participants in leveraging their influence to achieve significant and measurable solutions in the areas of conflict minerals and slave labor.