

# What's next for human rights and labour activists in Uzbekistan?

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## The Uzbek Forum for Human Rights

[Uzbek Forum](#) for Human Rights (formerly Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights) is a Berlin-based NGO dedicated to protecting human rights and strengthening and promoting civil society in Uzbekistan. Since 2009, Uzbek Forum has worked with a network of local human rights activists in Uzbekistan, often working undercover for fear of reprisals by the Uzbek authorities, to expose human rights violations. Uzbek Forum has published dozens of reports, articles, videos, and podcasts that have informed policymakers, including Uzbek government officials, investors such as the World Bank, international human rights bodies including the UN, and perhaps most importantly, Uzbek civil society itself. Uzbek Forum was nominated in 2018 and 2019 for the Human Rights and Business Award for organizations “doing important work and deserving international recognition”.

## Umida Niyazova Biography

Umida Niyazova is a director and founder of the Uzbek Forum for Human Rights. She worked as a human rights advocate in Uzbekistan from 2000 – 2008 when she was forced to flee her country because of her work. She has worked in the Tashkent offices of organizations such as Internews Network, Freedom House and Human Rights Watch.

In 2007, Umida was arrested in Tashkent and sentenced to seven years imprisonment on charges of “illegally crossing a border”, “production or distribution of materials that threaten public safety and public order”, and for “smuggling extremist religious materials”. After a widespread outcry and with the support of international organizations, she was finally released after four months in prison.



## Information on the Strathclyde Cluster on Central Asia and former Soviet States (SCAFSS)

Over the past decade, Strathclyde has been home to several notable strands of research on forced labour in Uzbekistan (McGuire and Lasser, 2019), carceral studies and Russian prisons (Piacentini, 2018, 2022), and central Asian transition economies and global value chains (Makhmadshoev, 2018; 2022). These strands reveal communalities in overlapping research interests, methodological expertise on data collection in Central Asia and former Soviet States; and similarity in how they coalesce around multi-disciplinary research. They also draw attention to the inherent interdisciplinarity required for rigorous and original research in such contexts, as well as the need to work with international research partners in a non-extractive way.

The project builds on and brings together research expertise of colleagues from different departments and faculties working on societal and business issues in the region, including Work, Employment and Organisation, the School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship. In partnership with NGOs, trade unions and international academics, SCASS seeks to coordinate and stimulate cross-disciplinary university wide research on countries including, but not limited to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirgizstan.