

FREEDOM**UNITED**

# FREE GASPAR MATALAEV

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## CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

On October 4, 2016, human rights activist Gaspar Matalaev was arrested in Turkmenistan, Central Asia. He has reportedly been subjected to torture by electric current to force him to confess to false charges of minor fraud. Gaspar is a human rights researcher in the country, where he has been monitoring the state-orchestrated forced labor system in the Turkmenistan cotton fields. His work has helped draw attention to the Turkmen Government's annual mobilization of tens of thousands of citizens forced to pick cotton under threat of punishment. Gaspar's arrest came two days after he published a report on the extensive use of forced labor and child labor in the 2016 cotton harvest and one day after the Minister of National Security was severely reprimanded by the Turkmen President at a State Security Council meeting for not properly repressing activism in the country. It is almost certain Gaspar's arrest was politically motivated. With no substance to the charges brought against Gaspar, it is now up to the international community to speak out and demand his release.

### YOU CAN HELP BY:

- 1 Spreading the word on social media
- 2 Calling on your networks by email
- 3 Facilitating a group conversation on the topic

### CAMPAIGN LOGISTICS:

We are calling on the Turkmen authorities to immediately release Gaspar and allow him to continue his work free from persecution. Courageous monitors like Gaspar who put themselves at risk to help others should have the freedom to monitor the annual cotton harvest without threat of arrest and torture. See the full campaign [here](#).

**This campaign kit will help you to promote the initiative.**

Thank you for being part of it:



Twitter

@FreedomUnitedHQ  
#FreeGaspar



Facebook

@FreedomUnitedHQ  
#FreeGaspar



Youtube

@FreedomUnited  
#FreeGaspar



Instagram

@FreedomUnitedHQ  
#FreeGaspar

## WAYS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

### Tell everyone about the campaign on social media

Feel free to copy and paste the content below in posts on your social media accounts.

#### Sign the Petition



#FreeGaspar – detained and tortured for reporting on forced labor in Turkmen cotton fields – by signing the Freedom United petition here: <https://goo.gl/1yUHJQ>



#FreeGaspar – detained and tortured for reporting on #ForcedLabor in Turkmen cotton fields. Sign here <https://goo.gl/1yUHJQ>



Demand freedom for Gaspar Matalaev – arrested for reporting on Turkmen #ForcedLabor <https://goo.gl/1yUHJQ>



Join @FreedomUnitedHQ and stand alongside detained human rights monitor Gaspar Matalaev <https://goo.gl/1yUHJQ>



#FreeGaspar – detained and tortured for reporting on forced labor in Turkmen cotton fields. Sign the Freedom United petition here: <https://goo.gl/1yUHJQ>

## WAYS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

### Email Your Networks and Supporters

#### Sign the Petition

The more petition signatures we can collect, the greater the international scrutiny on the Turkmen authorities' practices, and the more likely they are to act. Ask your networks and supporters to get involved!

We've put together some draft text below, feel free to amend and share:

*On October 4, 2016, human rights researcher Gaspar Matalaev was arrested in Turkmenistan, Central Asia. He has reportedly been subjected to torture by electric current to force him to confess to false charges of minor fraud.*

*Gaspar is a human rights researcher in Turkmenistan, where he has been monitoring the state-orchestrated forced labor system in the country's cotton fields. His work has helped draw attention to the Turkmen Government's annual mobilization of tens of thousands of citizens, including children, forced to pick cotton under threat of punishment.*

*It is now up to the international community to speak out and demand action on behalf of courageous monitors like Gaspar who put themselves at risk to help others.*

*Please sign the Freedom United petition to demand the Turkmenistan Government immediately release Gaspar and allow him to continue his work in safety:*

<https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/free-gaspar-matalaev/>

### Have an email coming up with little space or a P.S. you can share? Here's a shorter version:

*On October 4, 2016, human rights researcher Gaspar Matalaev was arrested and reportedly tortured in Turkmenistan, Central Asia. Gaspar is a human rights researcher in Turkmenistan, where he has been monitoring the state-orchestrated forced labor system in the country's cotton fields. It is now up to the international community to speak out and demand action on behalf of courageous monitors like Gaspar who put themselves at risk to help others. Sign the Freedom United petition here:*

<https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/free-gaspar-matalaev/>

## START A CONVERSATION

### Facilitating a group conversation on the topic

Spreading awareness of Gaspar's situation is a crucial step in ensuring the success of this campaign. One way you can help is by holding a workshop or seminar in your group or organization to discuss the issues at hand and get members thinking about the key issues of the campaign.

#### Here are some questions to help frame your conversation:

- Why do you think that the Turkmen authorities go to such extreme measures to prevent individuals speaking out about the forced mobilization of labor for the cotton harvest?
- Why do you think it is necessary for the international community to act on Gaspar's behalf? Do you think it is possible to campaign in Turkmenistan on this topic?
- Why do you think other countries have taken limited actions to put a stop to the state-ran forced labor system in Turkmenistan?
- Can you think of any other places around the world where it is difficult to speak out about the government, and what measures are taken to prevent citizens doing so?
- How can we, as a group, get the word out about the Free Gaspar Matalaev campaign?

**We would love to know how you get on! Please add a comment to the campaign page, or send in photos of your group discussion to [info@freedomunited.org](mailto:info@freedomunited.org) and we will share it**

## OUR PARTNERS

Organizations:



Cotton Campaign [www.cottoncampaign.org](http://www.cottoncampaign.org)

The Cotton Campaign is a coalition of human rights organizations, trade unions, socially responsible investors and business associations united to end forced labor of children and adults in the cotton industry in Uzbekistan. Since 2007, the Cotton Campaign has advocated with governments, companies and investors to use their leverage to end this continuous and systematic human rights violation. Its advocacy has contributed to key steps towards securing fundamental labor rights for Uzbek and Turkmen citizens.

**Have any questions about the campaign?**

Contact: Miriam Karmali, Advocacy [miriam@freedomunited.org](mailto:miriam@freedomunited.org)

**Need some help spreading the word on social media?**

Contact: Kat French, Social Media [kat@freedomunited.org](mailto:kat@freedomunited.org)