

N.Y. Cancels Fashion Show by Uzbek Leader's Daughter

September 11, 2011

The  Moscow Times

NEW YORK — The organizers of New York Fashion Week have canceled a show by the designer daughter of Uzbekistan's leader Islam Karimov, who has been accused of human rights abuses.

Gulnara Karimova was due to present her Guli-brand spring/summer 2012 collection Thursday. Karimova showed her collection at the event in September last year, but her family connections only hit the headlines last week.

Her 73-year-old father has ruled Uzbekistan since 1989. Human rights groups accuse the tough former Communist boss of violating basic freedoms and blocking democracy.

"As a result of various concerns raised, we have canceled the Guli show," a spokesman for IMG, which organizes New York Fashion Week, said in a statement.

Harvard-educated Karimova, 39, who is also Uzbekistan's ambassador to Spain and to the United Nations in Geneva, where she lives with her son and daughter, was not

immediately available for comment.

A promotional statement said Thursday that the show would "feature 30 looks in natural silk, organic cotton, leather embellishments, rare Uzbek fabrics such as shoi, and intricate ikat prints — all updated with contemporary shapes and cuts."

Human Rights Watch said it was glad that New York Fashion Week would "no longer showcase a designer who represents such a repressive government."

"The message is clear that abusers will not be allowed to launder their image at the expense of human rights," said Steve Swerdlow, Uzbekistan researcher for Human Rights Watch.

Karimova has supported a number of charities, but her image as a philanthropist was dealt a blow recently with the release of U.S. diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks.

"The discussion of the honest, hardworking [Gulnara], looking out for the best interests of her country, likely irks the many business people who have been crushed by Karimova and her greed as well as the general public, who view her as something of a robber baron," one dispatch reads.

In March, Human Rights Watch said it had been forced to close its office in Uzbekistan after facing years of harassment by Uzbek authorities.

(Reuters, AP)

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/09/11/ny-cancels-fashion-show-by-uzbek-leaders-daughter-a9459>