



RMT's Alex Gordon's Message to Reza Shahabi

12 December 2011

Dear Comrade Shehabi,

I write to you at the request of your friends and comrades in the International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI). I am President of the National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (RMT), which organises 80,000 public transport workers in Britain, including rail, metro, bus and taxi workers.

Workers around the world are today preparing for potentially the most significant confrontation with global capitalism in history. We are constantly informed about your struggles for political freedom and for the full trade union rights of Iranian workers and about the gross and scandalous oppression against you and other Iranian comrades by the anti-working class regime in Iran.

In August 2010 I was able to move a resolution at the four-yearly Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in Mexico City in solidarity with the VAHED Syndicate and with all the imprisoned trade union officers, including yourself. You were named specifically in the resolution. This year we have worked with socialist and pro-working class members of parliament in Britain to highlight your case and to call for your freedom.

We respect the independence and the sovereignty of the Iranian people and its workers' movement and we want to offer you every possible assistance to regain your freedom and to take forward the fight for workers' rights in Iran.

It is for that reason that I am asking you at the request of your comrades in the Iranian workers' movement to suspend your hunger strike, which has now been taking place for 21 days. We know your determination to resist the torture and the oppression of the Iranian regime. No-one, not even your enemies, can doubt your courage and mental strength to fight for your rights and your beliefs. I am asking you to suspend your hunger strike because the working class movement needs leaders such as yourself to live, rather than to die, and from this point on the pain that you have already experienced in refusing to take food will lead to further and perhaps fatal damage to your vital body functions (liver, kidney, heart, etc).

I earnestly ask you to break from this brave and desperate action of hunger striking, which if it continues will deprive the Iranian people of another leader, just as surely as the Iranian anti-working class regime seeks to kidnap, wrongly imprison and execute your movement's leaders. Please announce to your family and comrades around the world that you will suspend the hunger strike in order to show faith in our movement's ability to triumph.

Yours in solidarity,

Alex Gordon,

**President,
National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (RMT)**

For more information on the situation of Reza Shahabi and other Iranian imprisoned workers, see:
<http://www.workers-iran.org/>