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Demonstration in support of workers' and trade-union rights in Iran

Where: in front of the head office of ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

When: June 9, 2011

(More detailed information to be announced shortly)

Join June 9th day of action in support of workers' rights and struggles in Iran

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI)-Switzerland

info@workers-iran.org

www.workers-iran.org

Solidarity statement of French trade union collective:

May 1, 2011: Let us defend trade-union freedoms in Iran!

May first, the day of international solidarity of the world of the work, celebrated everywhere in the world, approaches. This year, the salutary shock wave of rising of the Arab people hustles the dictatorships and carries a message of hope, freedom, democracy and social progress. But in Iran, according to reports of Amnesty International, a wave without precedent of repression falls down on the people and aims mainly the militants trade unionists.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, however signatory of conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO, does not recognize May 1 as a public holiday nor does not tolerate its celebration. Moreover, the elementary rights of the Iranian workers and wage earners, enumerated and protected by these conventions, are not respected by the Iranian government. The wages are not paid in time, the job security is non-existent, precarious work is the rule and the right of the workers to establish their independent organizations and to elect their representatives are not respected.

With this occasion, we have a thought for the militant trade unionists who are imprisoned because of celebrating on May 1st in Iran. We are interdependent of the fight of the Iranian workers and wage earners and support without reserve their efforts in order to obtain their rights recognized by the International Conventions, and particularly their trade-union rights and freedoms.

We strongly condemn the harassing and the imprisonment of the militants of the social movements in Iran. Currently, several members of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company (Sherkat-E-Vahed), some activists of the Syndicate of the Iranian Teachers and other militants trade-unionists are imprisoned in Iran. Another imprisoned teacher, Mr. Abdolreza Ghanbari, was condemned to death with the charge of taking part in the anti-government demonstrations of December 2009.

We demand the release without condition of all the workers and other activists of the social movements, who have arbitrarily been sacked, arrested and imprisoned. We declare that the Iranian workers are not alone, the world of organized labour of France and international is at their side.

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- Support workers' movement demands and struggles in Iran, including the right to organize free and independent labour organizations and the right to strike.
- Strive for an absolute end to the systematic repression, persecution, imprisonment, torture, assassination and execution of labour activists and political opponents in Iran.
- Promote the implementation and enforcement of internationally recognized human and workers' rights and freedoms for all people in Iran.

The IASWI has been working in collaboration with many labour and progressive activists and organizations in Iran and around the world to strengthen worker-to-worker solidarity in defence of workers' rights and struggles in Iran and against the repressive Islamic Republic of Iran and its capitalist and neo-liberal policies and practices. As an international solidarity campaign in support of workers in Iran, the IASWI has colleagues and branches in North America, Europe and other parts of the world that work collaboratively towards the realization of the above objectives.

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www.etehadbinalmelali.com

Long Live May 1!
Long Live international solidarity!

Contacts of the members of the trade-union collective (Contacts des membres du collectif syndical)
CFDT : Philippe Réau preau@cfdt.fr + 33 6 48 36 03 93
CGT : Jean-François Courbe jf.courbe@cgt.fr + 33 6 76 49 00 17
FSU : Corinne Vialle corinne.vialle@snuipp.fr + 33 6 09 80 46 04
Solidaires : Alain Baron contact@solidaires.org + 33 (0) 1 58 39 30 20
UNSA : Saïd Darwane darwane@unsa.org + 33 6 71 85 16 65

The original statement in French:

1er mai 2011

Défendons les libertés syndicales en Iran!

Le premier mai, journée de solidarité internationale du monde du travail, célébré partout dans le monde, approche. Cette année, l'onde de choc salutaire de soulèvement des peuples arabes bouscule les dictatures et porte un message d'espoir, de liberté, de démocratie et de progrès social. Mais en Iran, selon les rapports d'Amnesty International, une vague sans précédent de répression s'abat sur le peuple et vise principalement les militants syndicalistes.

La République Islamique d'Iran, pourtant signataire des conventions 87 et 98 de l'O.I.T, ne reconnaît pas le 1er mai comme un jour férié ni ne tolère sa célébration. De plus, les droits élémentaires des travailleurs et salariés iraniens, énumérés et protégés par ces conventions, ne sont pas respectés par le gouvernement iranien. Les salaires ne sont pas payés à temps, la sécurité d'emploi est inexistante, le travail précaire est la règle et le droit des travailleurs et salariés d'établir leurs organisations indépendantes et d'élire leurs représentants ne sont pas respectés.

A cette occasion, nous avons une pensée pour les militants syndicalistes qui ont fait de la prison pour avoir célébré le 1er mai en Iran. Nous sommes solidaires de la lutte des travailleurs et salariés iraniens et soutenons sans réserve leurs efforts en vue d'obtenir leurs droits reconnus par les conventions internationales, et avant tout leurs droits et libertés syndicaux.

Nous condamnons avec force le harcèlement et l'emprisonnement des militants des mouvements sociaux en Iran. Actuellement, plusieurs membres du Syndicat des Travailleurs de la Compagnie de Bus de Téhéran et Banlieue (Sherkat-é-Vahed), une dizaine d'activistes de l'Association Syndicale des Enseignants Iraniens et d'autres militants syndicaux sont toujours emprisonnés en Iran. Un autre enseignant emprisonné, Monsieur Abdolreza Ghanbari, a été condamné à mort pour avoir participé aux manifestations anti-gouvernementales du décembre 2009.

Nous réclamons la libération sans condition de tous les travailleurs et des autres militants des mouvements sociaux arbitrairement licenciés, arrêtés et emprisonnés.

Nous déclarons que les travailleurs iraniens ne sont pas seuls, le monde du travail organisé français et international est à leur côté.

Vive le 1er mai !

Vive la solidarité internationale !

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Mahmoud Salehi's open letter to the ITUC General Secretary

Date: May 11, 2011

To: Ms. Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5, Bte 1; 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Re: Arrests of labour activists in Iran
From: Mahmoud Salehi, Saghez, Iran

Dear Ms. Sharan Burrow,

With warm greetings,

On May Day 2011, some of the labour activists in cities of Sanandaj and Saghez were summoned and subsequently arrested. In Saghez, Ali Hosseini and Hossein Moradi and I were arrested. I got arrested while I was very ill; a few days prior to the arrest I had a surgery performed on me by Dr. Mansour Alizadeh for the purpose of dialysis. About 35 centimetres of artificial vessels were implanted through my body's left side. Despite such serious health conditions, the authorities arrested me at 1:30 pm on May 1, 2011 and detained me in a very cold room without any charges. This room was so cold that I developed pain and discomfort.

Iranian security Forces arrested Messrs Wafa Ghaderi, Khaled Hosseini, Ghaleb Hosseini and Yadullah Ghotbi, all of whom labour activists and members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations, on April 30, 2011 in City of Sanandaj. *

The authorities have intensified pressures on these incarcerated labour activists without any charges against them; they have been trying to coerce them into depositing huge amount of money as their bails. The family of detained workers cannot afford such heavy bails. These arrested labour activists have also been pressured to resign from the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations in spite of the fact that the "Coordinating Committee" is an open organization of labour activists.

The Iranian government, even with its membership in the International Labour Organization, and despite commitments made to respect Conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO, has banned commemoration of the International Workers' Day by workers and have been arresting and incarcerating workers and labour activists by reason of participating at May Day events.

The Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations is an independent labour organization. The "Coordinating Committee, in partnership with other labour organizations, endeavoured to organize May Day rallies this year, but ended up being oppressed by security and intelligent forces. By uttering threats against workers and members of the Coordinating Committee, the security forces made attempts to stop the whole event.

Hereby, I, Mahmoud Salehi, as a retired worker and a member of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations, ask you to protest against these unjust treatments of workers in Iran, and demand immediate and unconditional freedom of all jailed labour activists and members of the Coordinating Committee to help Form Workers' Organizations. The Coordinating Committee also would like to follow up on a complaint against the Iranian government for the violation of the rights of workers' organizations which was submitted to the ILO in 2010 but it appears that it has not yet been addressed.

Thank you

Mahmoud Salehi
May 11, 2011 (21 Ordibehesht 1390)

January 2000 with the following objectives:

- Support workers' movement demands and struggles in Iran, including the right to organize free and independent labour organizations and the right to strike.
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- Promote the implementation and enforcement of internationally recognized human and workers' rights and freedoms for all people in Iran.

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cc: to workers' rights and trade union organizations internationally

P.S. Grievance dated June 30, 2010 concerning the Iranian government's non-compliance with ILO's conventions # 87 and 98 is attached

* According to the latest report by the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations, Wafa Ghaderi was released on 50 million Toman bail (about 48,000 US\$) and Yadullah Ghotbi was released on 30 million Toman bails on May 11, 2011; and Khaled Hosseini and Ghaleb Hosseini were released on 50 Toman bail on May 12, 2011. According to this report, the security forces released these labour activists outside the City to avert any gathering of their family, friends and supporters outside the prison.

Link to the original letter in Farsi:

http://www.komitteyehamahangi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147:1390-02-21-12-26-39&catid=11:1389-12-23-23-55-51&Itemid=30

Date: 09 Tir, 1389 (30 June 2010)
ILO Director-General Juan Somavia
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Genève 22
Switzerland

Subject: Grievance concerning the Iranian government's non-compliance with ILO's conventions # 87 and 98

Dear Director General;

The Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations is a labour organization established on May of 2005 in Iran, according to conventions of ILO, including conventions # 87 and 98.

....On 7 October 2009 this committee, made a formal request to Islamic Republic's "Ministry of Labour and social Affairs" to be officially registered as such, according to Iranian and international labour laws (A copy of the request was also sent to ILO at the same time). After some months the officials of the Labour Ministry without any credible, compelling reasons refused to register the Committee, and through a letter (#84926) on 1 February 2009 they informed us our organization will not be registered. After receiving this response we also made additional similar request from provincial officials, such requests which at the present are still continuing, have not reached any resolution yet. This denial of our right to create an autonomous organization has resulted in having many of our active members being summoned to court, incarcerated, fined and punished based on dubious charges. For your information only during last year (1388) 120 members of this Committee were either arrested or summoned to court, some other members are incarcerated, charged with membership in this Committee.

You are fully aware that Iranian government is a member of ILO, and is obliged to recognize workers' rights to creating their independent organizations. Hence, we are asking you to remind Iranian government of its obligations regarding workers' rights and to augment our endeavor as you see fit to have our committee formally recognized and registered.

Sincerely,
Mahmoud Salehi
Iran-Kurdistan: The City of Saqez

Cc: Relevant International labour organizations

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May Day 2011 in Iran: workers resist oppression

Independent marches and rallies to commemorate the International Working Class Day have been brutally oppressed and banned in Iran. Only government-sponsored organizations, like Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran, are allowed to organize official events, which are basically pro-regime ceremonies. Organizations like the "Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations" and the "Free Union of Workers in Iran" are independent associations endeavouring to organize autonomous events including marches and rallies on May Day to raise awareness about workers' rights and demands. Every year, security forces have been arresting their members and other labour activists. In many areas in Iran, workers' are only able to organize picnics, hiking and indoor activities, but since the crush of May Day 2009 in Tehran by security forces, very few open activities on streets have taken place on the occasion of the International Workers' Day. This is also true for all other progressive movements such as students who have been severely oppressed in recent years.

Sanandaj, the Centre of the Kurdistan province, was among the few areas in Iran that the independent labour organizations were able to hold open rallies and marches on streets. Workers and labour activists marched down Ferdowsi Street around 6 PM in City of Sanandaj on May 1, 2011. Some of the signs held by demonstrators read: "Workers Let's Organize Against Capital", "Imprisoned Workers Shall be Freed", "Students, Workers, Unite". Hundreds of people surrounding the demonstrators were visibly and clearly elated by such demands and slogans.

This march was conducted while the entire city was under a severe security crackdown. During the workers' march, some security agents in civilian clothes tried to take away the signs from the workers' hands, which were unsuccessful due to workers' forceful resistance. Security forces, helpless in stopping workers, kept calling their superiors for instructions. The May First marchers continued on until they reached Namaki Junction, where they were confronted with an organized police presence, which forced the march to an end.

Prior to and on May 1st, a number of labour activists including Mahmoud Salehi were summoned and/or arrested in Saghez on May First and released subsequently. Also, three members of the Free Union of Workers, Sedigh Karimi, Sharif Saedpanah and Khalil Karimi as well as Mr. Shais Amani were summoned to the Intelligence ministry's office in city of Sanandaj and detained briefly.

Moreover, on April 30th in Sanandaj, security Forces arrested and detained for more than 10 days Messrs Khaled Hosseini, Wafa Ghaderi, Ghaleb Hosseini and Yadullah Ghotbi, all members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations. The above named individuals were arrested simply because they are influential workers' rights activists and Iranian Security forces were fearful that they were mobilizing workers to attend May Day rally in the City. The authorities had unsuccessfully pressured these activists to resign from the Coordinating Committee. The family of detained workers, as well as justice seeking people in the area, protested against this injustice by organizing a considerably large sit-in and demanded their release immediately and with no conditions. These four activists were released on May 10th and 11th but with heavy bail and will have to face trial soon.

We are calling on all workers' rights and labour organizations internationally to intensify pressures on the Islamic Republic of Iran's authorities to drop all charges against May Day detainees unconditionally as well as freeing all other jailed workers.



International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran

The burial ceremony of Behzad Kazemi (Ali Reza Ismaili Nasab)

January 2000 with the following objectives:

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Behzad (Ali Reza) Kazemi passed away on the 22nd of April 2011 at 57 years of age. His passing deprives the Iranian Socialist and Workers movement of one its most active and tireless militants. He remained a Socialist for nearly four decades, fighting against capitalism, inequality, state repression, oppression and the crimes of the present. He fought for a world free of exploitation and misery, for Socialism.

We gather to say our final farewell. To honour the life and struggles of an honourable man who sought a different world, worthy of human dignity. A defender of the workers and the impoverished he wished bread, freedom and joy for everyone and, until the end, gave all his efforts to make this a reality.

From his partner Ava Barchetuva, his comrades and the friends of Behzad Kazemi.

The burial ceremony and memorial will be held on Monday 16 May 2011

The burial will be 2-3 pm
Trent Park Cemetery
Cockfosters Road, Enfield EN4 0DZ
Nearest tube station: Cockfosters

Memorial Ceremony from 6:30 to 10 pm

Nearest Tube: Holborn
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square
London, WC12 4RL

If you have any queries please contact:

Maryam: 07799382413 / Ettehad_ma@yahoo.co.uk

Osanloo and Shahabi are experiencing deteriorating health problems in prison

While incarcerated in Rajayee Shahr Prison in the City of Karaj, Mansour Osanloo suffered from another heart attack symptoms, and this time, following mounting pressures by his family members, the authorities temporarily transferred him to a private hospital in Tehran where his family are expected to pay for his medical fees as well as the cost of food for the three guards that had accompanied him to the hospital. The authorities had spread a rumour that they were bringing a "murderer" to the hospital as Osanloo was shackled by feet. However, according to credible reports, staff of the hospital welcomed Osanloo by flower and sweets.

Also, according to a report by the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company and other reports confirmed by members of his family, Reza Shahabi has been having health problems lately, particularly since starting May 2011, while in Evin prison, including ongoing nose bleeding; however, authorities have thus far refused to take him to hospital using different excuses and empty promises that they would do it at a later time.

The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company is affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). On May 13, 2011, ITF issued a new statement, demanding the release of trade unionists imprisoned in Iran – including Mansour Osanloo, Reza Shahabi and Ebrahim Madadi. See the link below:

<http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/5962>

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Sample Protest letter:

Stop persecution and prosecution of workers in Iran
Free all jailed workers now
Free Osanloo, Madadi, Shahabi and Ebrahimzadeh

I (we) am (are) writing this to demand an immediate and unconditional freedom of all jailed workers and labour activists in Iran. The persecution and prosecution of labour activists in Iran must be stopped immediately.

I (we) demand immediate and unconditional freedom of elected representatives of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company, including Reza Shahabi who has been in jail since June 2010 without trial, , in addition to Mansour Osanloo and Ebrahim Madadi who have been in prison since 2007. Osanloo and Shahabi have been experiencing deteriorating health problems in recent months.

I (we) also demand an immediate end to persecution of members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations and the and The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Free Workers' Organizations. Since 2010, more than 120 members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations have been either arrested or summoned to court. In addition, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a member of "The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Free Workers Organizations", has been incarcerated in Evin's division of 350 since June 12, 2010 and is facing a 20-year jail sentence.

Moreover, this May Day, once again, the security forces did not allow any independent May Day rallies and arrested labour activists in Saghez and Sanandaj. Arrestees are released on very heavy bails and will face trials soon for practicing their most basic rights.

I (we) condemn the continuous gross attacks on human and workers' rights in Iran. I (we) demand the immediate and unconditional freedom of all labour activists and political prisoners and call on the government to respect the right to organize, assemble and freedom of association and expression.

Name:
Organization:
Position:

Send Copy of your Protest Letters to:
info@leader.ir, info@judiciary.ir, dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir; iran@un.int; ijpr@iranjudiciary.org, info@dadiran.ir, office@justice.ir, support@irimlsa.ir; info@humanrights-iran.ir; avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
CC: info@workers-iran.org

An important resolution in support of popular movements for social and economic justice in the Middle East and North Africa

Below is a very important resolution prepared for the CUPE Ontario 48th Annual Convention that will take place May 25-28, 2011 in Toronto. This resolution was submitted to the CUPE Ontario in March 2011; it is expected to be addressed at the CUPE Ontario 48th annual convention. We are encouraging other unions and labour organizations to adopt similar resolutions and/or position statements in support of social and economic justice movements in North Africa and Middle East.

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IASWI Newsletter
Vol 1, No 2
May 15, 2011

Resolution No. 63

Submitted by Locals 3393, 4772 and International Solidarity Committee

CUPE Ontario will:

- Join our Egyptian and Tunisian sisters/brothers in welcoming the fall of dictators Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali.
- Work with CUPE National, Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and international labour organizations to support the mobilizations to achieve socio-economic justice and democratic rights in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Educate members on the importance of supporting workers in the region in their struggle for the formation of independent labour organizations, the right to strike, and against neoliberal policies pushed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.
- Oppose military interventions by governments and/or western forces/allies ultimately aimed at undermining the rights and self-determination of the peoples of the region.

Because:

- Working-class mobilizations, including protests, strikes, sit-ins, and demands for work and better wages, as well as democratic rights, played crucial roles in the fall of dictators Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali in Egypt and Tunisia.
- Popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt have inspired ordinary people from Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Algeria to Jordan, Iran and Iraq to stand up against economic and political injustice and repression.
- Popular movements for social and economic justice in the Middle East and North Africa need international solidarity and support to ensure that they will achieve their aspirations.

Source: http://www.cupe.on.ca/aux_file.php?aux_file_id=3668

Free Madadi, Osanloo, Shahabi and Ebrahimzadeh

