

Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
The Presidency,
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Subject: Stop the crackdown on union organizers

August 18, 2008

Dear President Ahmadinejad,

The International Solidarity Commission (ISC) of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an international independent labor union, is outraged at the recent whipping sentences and jail terms against labor activists in Iran. We have been informed that Ms. Sousan Razani and Ms. Shiva Kheirabadi each were sentenced to 4 months imprisonment and 15 lashes; Mr. Abdullah Khani was sentenced to 91 days prison and 40 lashes and Mr. Seyed Qaleb Hosseini was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and 50 lashes. The verdict was issued by the Criminal Court of Sanandaj – branch 101. The above labor activists are sentenced so severely only because of their participation in 2008 May Day celebration in Sanandaj. In addition, Mr. Khaled Hosseini, a worker activist, was sentenced to 91 days suspended jail and 30 lashes because of his efforts in support of Mahmoud Salehi who was imprisoned at the time.

We also find it necessary to remind you that on July 20, 2008, Mr. Farzad Kamangar was sentenced to death after having a seven minutes trial. Farzad Kamangar is a teacher, who has been brutally tortured because of unsubstantiated allegations such as collaborating with the Pejak Party, membership in the PKK, and transporting explosives. Many individuals and organizations from Iran and abroad have protested his detention and the recent death sentence against him but your government has disregarded all these pleas.

Another activist, Mr. Afshin Shams, was arrested in July 2008. Mr. Shams is a labor activist, a member of "Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' organizations", a member of the "Committee in Dense of Mahmoud Salehi" and a member of "Caricaturists Society". Moreover, there have been other arrests and charges against labor and social activists in Iran as well as dismissal of labor activists, including the recent dismissal verdict against nine members of the bus workers syndicate.

All the above arrests and repressive measures are clear indications of intensified offensives against the entire labor movement in Iran. The ISC calls on your government to unconditionally and immediately release all prisoners of conscious and repeal all charges and sentences against labor activists in Iran. We also call for the freedom of Mansour Osanloo, the president of Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, who has been imprisoned since July 2007 and is serving a five year jail term. We also demand the immediate recognition and realization of human and workers' rights to all workers in Iran, including the rights to organize freely and to strike.

Sincerely,
Michael Pesa
International Solidarity Commission
Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)