



Reza Shahabi temporarily released on bail

*January 7, 2013 - Reza Shahabi was temporarily freed on bail at about 10:45 pm, Monday, January 7, 2013 after over three weeks of hunger strike. His family members were not informed by the authorities about his release. Reza arrived home at about 11:30 pm. He stopped his hunger strike at home where his family members and friends had gathered to welcome him.

All details of Shahabi's conditional release are not available at this time; however, it is confirmed that Shahabi was released on medical grounds for five days to address his medical issues and health problems. He has also been banned from leaving the country.

Some leftist political prisoners in Evin Prison had openly started their hunger strike in support of Reza as of January 5, 2013. Reza Shahabi Defence Committee reports that Reza's fellow prisoners became very excited about his temporary release; they were collectively signing famous songs such as "Hava Delpazir Shod" or "The Weather Became Pleasant" and "Yare Dabestanei Man" or "My (Elementary) School Friend".

Following his release, Reza Shahabi sincerely thanked everyone and all labour and human rights organizations and concerned individuals in Iran and around the world for their incredible and continuous support and solidarity.

IASWI congratulates Reza Shahabi's conditional release to all allies and supporters of the Iranian working class. IASWI sends warmest greetings to Reza, his family, Reza Shahabi Defence Committee and all members of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company. The recent national and international campaigns in support of Reza Shahabi unquestionably contributed to Reza's freedom. Even though his release at this time seems to be very short in duration it would hopefully provide him with an opportunity to appropriately address his health problems and connect with his family members and friends. He would surely need an extended period of time to address his serious health problems. IASWI continues to demand the unconditional freedom of Reza Shahabi and the annulment of all sentences against Shahabi and all other labour activists in Iran. **

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* Reza Shahabi's new photo provided by Reza Shahabi Defence Committee after Reza arrived home about midnight, Jan 7, 2013.

** Reza Shahabi is the Treasurer and Executive Board member of the Syndicate of workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, which belongs to the Municipality of Tehran and has about seventeen thousand employees. He has been incarcerated since June 2010. All Executive board members of this union have been persecuted, dismissed and many were jailed since the launch of the Syndicate in 2005. Reza Shahabi was sentenced to six year imprisonment and five year ban on all union activities as well as 7 million Toman fine; the appeal court seems to have confirmed his sentence for four years imprisonment, five year ban on all union activities and 7 million toman penalty. Reza Shahabi's health deteriorated significantly after severe beatings and mistreatment following his arrest. As a result, he underwent cervical spine operation on July 24, 2012. Medical doctors recommended operations on his back as well. Contrary to doctors' recommendations, Shahabi was sent back to Ward 350 of Evin prison on August 14, 2012. Since then, his health has been drastically deteriorated. On December 17th, 2012, Reza Shahabi went on hunger strike to protest intimidating behaviour of his jail guards as well as the continued lack of proper medical treatment. He also refused to take any medication.