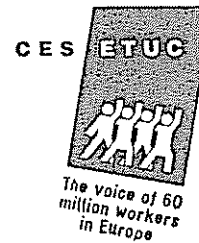


INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



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EQ/TUR/SF/CS

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The International Trade Union Confederation which represents 168 million trade unionists worldwide, and the European Trade Union Confederation which represents 60 millions workers in Europe, are shocked at the violence used by Iranian security forces to repress a peaceful demonstrations of women held in Tehran on 5 March 2007, during which 33 women were arrested and imprisoned. These women were protesting against the trial of 5 women activists accused of having held an "illegal demonstration" on 12 June 2006.

Although eight of the 33 arrested have since been released, the ITUC and ETUC are extremely concerned at the situation of the other 25 women who remain in jail and of whom many have launched a hunger strike. Two of these women, Parvin Ardalan and Mahnaz Mohammadi, reportedly suffer from multiple sclerosis and prison authorities are said to refuse to provide them with medical care. Three others have been transferred to a prison block holding common law criminals, where conditions are notoriously bad. Three more have been offered release on bail but judicial authorities have set their bail at 500 Million rials (54,000 US dollars) each.

The ITUC and ETUC consider that these women have been arrested only because they raised their voices against the discriminatory laws and the suppression of women's rights in Iran.

The harsh restrictions and systematic discrimination Iranian women face in law and in practice are a violation of the most fundamental human and civil rights and have a disastrous effect on the welfare of society as a whole.

The ITUC and ETUC are furthermore outraged that 13 women journalists have been arrested to prevent them from travelling to India to take part in an international training course.

These abuses, intimidations and arrests constitute a flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, binding on all UN Member States, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Iran in 1975, as well as of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Iran still has to ratify.

We call on the Iranian government to release those arrested immediately and without charges and to respect their basic human rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and gender equality. We also urge your government to order an investigation into the arrest of these women and to ensure that those responsible for these appalling abuses are severely punished. In the meantime, any detained women requiring medical care should be provided it at once and without restrictions.

On the occasion of the 8 of March, International Women's' Day, we wish to express our solidarity with the women of Iran and with all other women around the world who demand their right to live in a society free of all forms of discrimination and violence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Guy Ryder".

Guy Ryder
General Secretary
ITUC

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Monks".

John Monks
General Secretary
ETUC