

July 2011

Sample Protest letter:

Please take a moment to send this protest letter or use your own version:

**Stop persecution and prosecution of workers in Iran
Free all jailed labour activists now**

I (we) am (are) writing this to condemn persecution and arrests of labour activists in Iran. Labour activists in Iran are being constantly harassed and arrested by the Iranian government authorities. Latest reports from Iran indicate the arrest of the following workers:

- Mr. Shahrokh Zamani, a member of the “Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers’ Organisations” and one of organizers of “The Founding Committee of the Syndicate of Painting and Decorating Workers”, was arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence at midnight of 8 June 2011, while travelling from Tehran to Tabriz. 26 days later Shahrokh contacted his family and informed them that he is held in solitary confinement. He told them he had been in hunger strike for past 20 days in protest to his arrest. According to latest news he is due to be taken to Branch 4 of Tabriz Islamic Revolutionary Court on 19 July, 2011. According to the latest news, Shahrokh was transferred to Tabriz prison on July 13, 2011. He stopped his hunger strike after it was requested by other prisoners. He is currently in bad condition; he has lost lots of weight.
- Mohammad Jarahi, a member of the “Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers’ Organisations”, who worked in a petrochemical complex field of Asalooye before being sacked, was arrested by order from branch 11 of the Tabriz Revolutionary court on 20 June 2011.
- Mr. Seyed Biouk Seyed Lar, a worker at Saba Train, and well-known labour activist, was arrested in June 2011 and has been detained in Tabriz prison.
- Reza Shahabi, treasurer of the Syndicate of bus workers of Tehran and suburb, has been in custody in the notorious Evin prison for more than one year. He was arrested on 12 June 2010 without a charge. After almost a year on 25 May 2011 he was tried in a court in Tehran on charges of “propaganda against the Islamic State” and “conspiracy against National Security”. However, the prosecution is seeking to bring a fresh charge of “enmity against God” against Shahabi, a charge which carries a death sentence in Iran. Shahabi is still being held in Evin prison in a state of uncertainty. According to the latest news, his health has recently deteriorated.
- Ebrahim Madadi, vice president of the syndicate of Tehran bus workers, has been in prison since 27 December 2008 serving his three and half years prison sentence.
- Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a member of “The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations”, has been incarcerated in Evin’s division of 350 since June 12, 2010. He has been sentenced to 5 years imprisonment by branch 28 of Tehran revolutionary Court on 12 June 2011.

In addition to jailing workers, many labour activists have been sacked from their workplaces. For instance, all members of the executive board of “syndicate of workers of Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Company” have been fired. Also many members of Tehran bus workers’ syndicate have been sacked.

I (we) condemn the continuous gross attacks on 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; bia.judi@yahoo.com; info@mlsa.ir
CC: info@workers-iran.org

Background information:

Renewed campaign for release of all imprisoned labour activists in Iran

Labour activists in Iran continue to pay a heavy price for the achievement of their basic rights. It has always been a policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) to persecute worker activists by intimidations, kidnapping and arrest without charge, or sentencing them to long imprisonment in shambolic and unjust trials. Even while in prison, their basic rights as a human being is being violated. Now the regime is doing its utmost to make this sort of treatment of labour activists to become of the norm. Therefore, there is frequent news of more workers activists being persecuted. Recent incidents confirm this.

Mr. Shahrokh Zamani, a member of the “Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers’ Organisations” and one of organizers of “The Founding Committee of the Syndicate of Painting and Decorating Workers”, was arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence at midnight of 8 June 2011, while travelling from Tehran to Tabriz. 26 days later Shahrokh contacted his family and informed them that he is held in solitary confinement. He told them he had been in hunger strike for past 20 days in protest to his arrest. According to latest news he is due to be taken to Branch 4 of Tabriz Islamic Revolutionary Court on 19 July, 2011. According to the latest news, Shahrokh was transferred to Tabriz prison on July 13, 2011. He stopped his hunger strike after it was requested by other prisoners. He is currently in bad condition; he has lost lots of weight. At this time it is still not clear whether he would be tried or be informed of charges against him.

Mohammad Jarahi, a member of the “Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers’ Organisations”, who worked in a petrochemical complex field of Asalooye before being sacked, was arrested by order from branch 11 of the Tabriz Revolutionary court on 20 June 2011. Prior to this, Mohammad Jarahi had been arrested by the ministry of intelligent agents in 2007 and was sentenced to four months imprisonment, but was released early as result of a protest campaign launched by labour activists in Tabriz.

In addition, Mr. Seyed Biouk Seyyed Lar, a worker at Saba Train, and well-known labour activist, was arrested in June 2011 and has been detained in Tabriz prison.

Indeed one must add the names of above mentioned worker activists to a long list of labour activists who are either still in prison or have been released on bail after serving prison sentences:

Ebrahim Madadi, vice president of the syndicate of Tehran bus workers, has been in prison since 27 December 2008 serving his three and half years prison sentence.

Reza Shahabi, treasurer of the Syndicate of bus workers of Tehran and suburb, has been in custody in the notorious Evin prison for more than one year. He was arrested on 12 June 2010 without a charge. After almost a year on 25 May 2011 he was tried in a court in Tehran on charges of “propaganda against the Islamic State” and “conspiracy against National Security” which is a standard sham charge used by the Islamic state judiciary against almost all labour and political activists in Iran. However, the prosecution is seeking to bring a fresh charge of “enmity against God” against Shahabi, a charge which carries a death sentence in Iran. Shahabi is still being held in Evin prison in a state of uncertainty. According to the latest news, his health has recently deteriorated; he has been suffering from regular nose bleeding. He also suffered from neck pain, severe cramps and skin rash. Shahabi, similar to all other political prisoners, is denied of access to adequate medical examination and treatments.

Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a worker activist, a member of the “Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers’ Organisations” who also was a campaigner against child labour, was arrested on 12 June 2010 while boarding a bus. Initially he was tried in a Tehran court, charged with “Acting Against National Security” and “disturbing Public opinion” and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Following protests by his family and lawyer he was tried again in branch 28 of Tehran revolutionary Court on 12 June 2011 and was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment.

Mansour Osanloo, president of the board of directors of Syndicate of bus workers of Tehran and suburb was released on bail on June 2, 2011, after more than four years of unjust imprisonment. His imprisonment was protested world wide through sustained campaigns by trade unionists and human right organisations. Throughout his time in prison, Osanloo was suffering from a heart condition and eye problem. Prior to his recent release, Osanloo had spent almost 7 month in prison lasting from December 2005 to July 2006. According to the latest report from Iran, Mansour Osanloo’s release is considered provisional by the authorities and thus he is under onerous bail conditions and faces many restrictions.

In addition to imprisonment, many labour activists have been sacked from their workplaces as means to undermine workers' positions. For instance, all members of the executive board of "syndicate of workers of Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Company" have been sacked. Also many members of Tehran bus workers' syndicate have been sacked.

By imprisoning and sacking labour activists and leaders of independent labour organisations, the IRI aims to spread fear and intimidation among workers, to suppress functioning of already existing autonomous labour organisations and to prevent new ones being set up. This policy is ruthlessly pursued while the regime is implementing a neoliberal policy of cutting state subsidies to basic consumer goods such as bread, rice, fuel, water, gas, electricity. As result of these cut backs, cost of living has increased substantially in recent months, sending ever increasing numbers of families below the poverty line.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran once again utterly condemns arrest and imprisonment of labour activists in Iran. We vow to strengthen our campaigns for freedom of all imprisoned workers and political prisoners in Iran. We call on workers' organisations and trade unions internationally as well as human rights' organisations and all progressive parties to condemn violation of the most basic rights of workers in Iran. We specifically call on labour organisations in different countries to take initiatives in this regard and organise concrete actions in support of workers in Iran. The action taken by French trade union federations, in collaboration with Swiss trade unions, on June 9, 2011 in Geneva, was a great solidarity step that brought labour activists from Belgium and Italy to Senegal and Egypt together in support of workers' rights and struggles in Iran. A renewed campaign for immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned workers and to defend workers' rights in Iran to form their own independent labour organisations is urgently needed.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI)

July 15, 2011

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