



22 October 2007

Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
The Presidency,
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Dear President Ahmadinejad,

We are writing this letter, on behalf of the Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council, to express our serious concerns regarding the health and well-being of Mahmoud Salehi who has been in Sanadaj's central prison since April 9, 2007 as well as the continued detention of Mr. Mansour Osanloo since July 10, 2007. The Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council represents trades union branches across South West London. Our affiliated trades union branches take an active interest in cases of repression of trade unionists across the globe in whichever countries it may occur.

Mr. Salehi, a founding member and the former president of the Bakery Workers' Association of the city of Saqez and a well-known labour activist in Iran, has been sentenced unjustly to one year imprisonment and a three year suspended prison sentence for his labour activities. Mr. Salehi was arrested on April 9, 2007 without any prior notice and was immediately transferred to the city of Sanandaj. He faces a critical health condition because he only has one kidney, which functions at less than 20 percent of capacity, but the legal and prison authorities refuse to allow him the required treatments.

Mansour Osanloo, the president of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, was kidnapped by plain clothes agents on July 10, 2007. He was severely beaten and later transferred to the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran where he has been detained in section 209 with no right to bail. On November 19, 2006, Osanloo was similarly beaten and kidnapped and later was transferred to the Evin prison. After enduring one month of detention, Osanloo was released from section 209 of the Evin Prison on December 19, 2006. Prior to that, Osanloo had been in prison from December 22nd, 2005 for about 8 months until he was released on bail on August 9, 2006. In May 2007, Tehran revolutionary Court, Branch 14, issued a prison sentence of five years against Mr. Osanloo, but his lawyer had filed an appeal and his case was in process.

Moreover, Mr. Ebrahim Madadi, the vice-president of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran & Suburb Bus Company, has been in detention since August 9, 2007. His charges include 'propaganda against establishment, conspiracy and assembly for the purpose of endangering national security'. Other members of Syndicate have also been facing persecution and expulsion. The judicial authorities have also condemned thirteen member and activists of the Union of Dismissed and Unemployed Workers who had participated in the May Day 2007 rally in the city of Sanandaj with prison and whipping sentences.

Furthermore, thousands of workers of the state-owned Haft Tapeh sugar cane factory in city of Shoush in the Khuzestan province have been on strike since September 29, 2007. These workers have been facing severe repression by security forces through numerous arrests, intimidation and violent attacks on strikers. There are about 5000 employees in this factory, and they are struggling, among other things, for unpaid wages and the right to organize. Many other workers in different industries and areas in Iran are facing similar unbearable conditions.

Your government refuses to recognize freedom of association and the right to organize and has systematically repressed all independent activities of workers. We are therefore calling on your government to recognize workers' internationally recognised rights to organize free and independent labour organizations and the right to strike. We ask you to release Mahmoud Salehi, Mansour Osanloo and Ebrahim Madadi immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoner of conscience, detained solely for their labour activities. We also demand that all repressions and charges and sentences against all other labour activists, including members of Vahed syndicate and Unemployed Workers' Union and Haft Tapeh Workers..., to be dropped unconditionally and permanently, and that state repression of workers' rights cease in Iran once and for all.

Yours sincerely,

Seamus MacBride
President
BWTUC

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