

Open Letter to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

Stop collaboration with Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran

March 13, 2011: We are writing this open letter to once again strongly condemn the WFTU leadership's collaboration and close relationship with the Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Islamic Labour Councils, which are both notoriously known to be government-sponsored repressive organizations.

We have been informed that representatives of the Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been invited to attend the WFTU's 16th World Trade Union Congress, Athens Greece, April 6-10, 2011. This will be considered a big slap in the face of the Iranian labour movement and independent workers' organizations in Iran and their activists who are being incessantly persecuted and imprisoned while Workers' House's representatives are walking freely and travelling abroad with the full-backing of the capitalist Islamic regime of Iran. The WFTU leadership must stop this disgraceful practice immediately. The working class of Iran will never forget the collaboration of the WFTU leadership with the Iranian government and their agents at the Workers' House.

We wrote the open letter attached below to the WFTU in October 2007 and since then we have been sending news and campaigns about workers' rights and struggles in Iran and on the plight of Iranian labour activists who are imprisoned, sacked and persecuted to many of WFTU affiliates and its headquarters as well. We, among many other progressive labour organizations in Iran and abroad, have been issuing numerous statements about the Workers' House' anti-worker/ pro-regime character. We strongly believe that there are no more excuses for the WFTU leadership to continue their collaboration and friendly relationship with the Workers' House. Unfortunately, the WFTU's leadership has decided to disregard our letters and also the protests of other Iranian labour activists against their collaborations with the Workers' House of the brutal and anti-worker regime in Iran.

We once again assert that labour gatherings and congresses must be places for the real and genuine representatives of workers and not government-sponsored, anti-worker individuals and establishments such as the Workers' House and its delegates.

We are calling on all affiliates of the WFTU, many of whom have been supporting independent labour movement in Iran despite the official position of the WFTU, to pressure the leadership of the WFTU to sever all their ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and its so called "Workers' House".

Please see the statements below for more information; or contact the following persons:

Mahchid Modjaverian (mahchid@wanadoo.fr)
(CGT-France Transport)

Farid C. Partovi (info@workers-iran.org)
(President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4772) ***

cc: WFTU affiliates, and labour, progressive and anti-capitalist organizations in Iran and other countries.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI)
info@workers-iran.org
<http://www.etehadbinalmelali.com>

Open Letter to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

Re: the WFTU's Relations with Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran

As you are well aware, a WFTU Delegation visited Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran (WH) on July 16-20, 2007. The photos of this visit can be seen at the WFTU website*. This is not the first time WFTU and the Workers House have been engaged in friendly relationships. WFTU seems to have established an ongoing close relationship with WH. WFTU has previously extended invitations to the WH to attend its conferences as a representative of the Iranian working class. It's not even the first time an international labour federation has made such attempts to build close relationships with the WH. Each time however such attempts have received strong reactions by Iranian labour activists in Iran and abroad. WFTU too has previously received numerous letters regarding its unacceptable relationship with the WH. WFTU thus already knows very well that the Workers House is simply an instrument of the Islamic Republic of Iran and employers. It's not even a trade union, independent or not, by the furthest stretch of the imagination. It's an ideological group formed by the Islamic Republic of Iran for controlling Iranian labour movement. We and others in Iranian labour movement had previously sent WFTU information about WH that proves that WH is a means of controlling and suppressing independent labour activities and organizations in Iran. The Iranian labour movement undoubtedly sees the Workers House and the Islamic labour Councils as puppets of the Islamic Republic**.

Workers in Iran have been struggling tirelessly, despite ever-increasing repression, to form various independent organizations to demand the freedom of association and the right to organize and strike and other internationally recognized workers' and human rights. Iranian workers are denied the right to form any independent organization and those who act to form one are fired, persecuted, arrested and imprisoned or exiled. Time and time again, workers and progressives and anti-capitalists in Iran have declared that the Workers' House is not a labour organization and it does not represent workers at all. The expulsion of the Workers' House delegations from all international gatherings has been a major demand of Iranian labour activists in Iran and abroad.

WFTU and US Military Intervention in Iran:

We recognize and value the fact that the WFTU has repeatedly opposed war and imperialist militarization by the United States and its allies against countries like Iraq and Iran, etc. The WFTU is absolutely right in its position that economic sanctions and war would primarily (and the most drastically) affect working people. WFTU is also right to state that the US and its allies have used the pretext of the struggle against terrorism to attack and restrict democratic and trade union rights under the pretext of war on terror. A position based on the working class interests, however, must go way beyond this. The Iranian working class and the independent labour movement in Iran strongly oppose war and militarization in the region and around the world. In the context of the current confrontation between the US and its European allies and the Iranian government, i.e. nuclear power and so on, the Iranian labour movement is holding an independent position because this is not the working class conflict. The Iranian working class strongly opposes all kinds of arms races and nuclear weapons in all countries without exception. In term of war on Iran, the Iranian labour movement strongly and unequivocally opposes any military intervention or sanctions against Iran, because it's not only unacceptable and inhuman under any pretext, its main victims are always working people and their families. At the same time, the Iranian labour movement does not allow the Iranian government to use the threats of war and sanction as a pretext to continue, and intensify, persecuting, arresting, dismissing, kidnapping and jailing Iranian labour and progressive activists. Let's make it clear once and for all, the Islamic republic of Iran is not an anti-imperialist force; it's a cruel capitalist government, which is fully implementing the neo-liberal policies of global capitalism. Moreover, it's a regime that has been jailing and killing tens of thousands of labour and women's rights activists, students and socialists and other progressive forces in Iran. Moreover, we have said this repeatedly that the United States government, which in collaboration with corporations and industries has for years stripped workers of so many of their rights and protections, as the most dangerous nuclear and military power and the only government ever used the atomic bomb against people and its invasion of Iraq brought absolute disaster for the Iraqi people, has no credibility whatsoever on any of these issue. A progressive working class stance not only proactively opposes any attempts to pursue war or economic sanctions against Iran, it ought, at the same time, support the workers' struggles against the repressive government and capitalists in Iran who are forcefully

implementing the most aggressive anti-worker and neo-liberal policies in the country's contemporary history.

What needs to be done for workers rights in Iran?

Just six days before WFTU mission's arrival in Tehran to visit WH, Mansour Osanloo, the president of the board of directors of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, was kidnapped by plain clothes agents in the evening of Tuesday, July 10, 2007. Later on, he was transferred to the notorious Evin prison and has been kept imprisoned there since then. As you should remember, Osanloo's tongue was cut by a knife used by the Workers' House executives when members of Workers' House and Islamic Labour Council, with the support of security forces and the Vahed Bus Company, violently attacked the meeting of the Bus Workers' syndicate of Tehran in May 2005. Mahmoud Salehi, a prominent anti-capitalist labour leader in Iran, has been imprisoned in Sandanj's prison without the right for proper medical treatments. His health since imprisonment has been severely deteriorated and his family and colleagues are extremely worried for his life.

The WFTU calls for the establishing and the free functioning of Trade Union organisations in every country. It is absolutely undeniable that In Iran, in addition to the government, a main barrier for establishing free labour organizations is the Workers' House and its so called Islamic labour councils.

We are therefore calling on WFTU and its affiliates to immediately stop WFTU's friendly relationship with Workers' House of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are urging the WFTU to engage in a meaningful dialogue with independent labour activists in Iran and pro-actively support the following resolution in support of the Iranian labour movement in any possible ways you can.

Proposed Resolution in Support of workers in Iran

WHEREAS the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), has imposed deplorable political, economic and social conditions on workers and impoverished strata of society;

WHEREAS Iranian workers have consistently witnessed the imposition of anti-labour and neo-liberal policies and practices of government and employers and;

WHEREAS the IRI dismantled independent workers' councils and syndicates, which were set up democratically and freely by workers in various sectors and industries after the 1979 revolution, and identified activists of such organizations, tried them for framed up unfounded charges in sham courts, expelled many from their workplace, and arrested and executed others;

WHEREAS the Iranian government created "Islamic Labour Councils" and "Workers' House" in order to control workers and suppress independent workers' organizations;

WHEREAS workers in Iran continue to be deprived of the right to organize and strike and frequently face persecution, arrests and imprisonment –the persecution of the activists of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company and imprisonment of Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi and arrests and prosecution of other labour activists for organizing efforts or May Day activity are just some known examples and;

WHEREAS, the US Administration's drive to wage war against countries including Iran has been a pretext for massive attacks on labour, civil, immigrant, and human rights;

WHEREAS sanctions and military intervention in Iran will be disastrous, inhuman and totally and unacceptable under any pretext and its main victims will surely be the working people of Iran, ordinary women, men and children.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the WFTU and its affiliates strongly support the rights of Iranian workers to freely set up their independent workers' organizations and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the WFTU calls for immediate and unconditional freedom of Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi and all jailed labour activists;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that WFTU and its affiliates refuse any recognition of the “Islamic Labour councils” and “Workers’ House”, which are set up and backed by the government authorities and employers, in the name of Iranian workers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of the worldwide struggles against capitalist globalization and neo-liberalism, the WFTU will work with independent labour movement in Iran to strengthen worker-to-worker solidarity;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the WFTU takes a strong and proactive stand against any attempts by the US government and its allies to pursue sanctions and military interventions against Iran.

Thank you for taking these urgent and important issues and concerns into serious consideration. Please contact us at info@workers-iran.org if you have any questions or concerns.

International Relations- International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran

*****Contact Persons:**

Mahchid Modjaverian (mahchid@wanadoo.fr)

(CGT Transport)

Farid C. Partovi (info@workers-iran.org)

(Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4772)

cc: labour, progressive and anti-capitalist and anti-war organizations in Iran and other countries.

***WFTU Website, Photos: <http://www.wftucentral.org/>**

****Workers’ House- A brief historical background:**

Workers’ House (Khaneh Kargar) was founded under the old monarchical regime. In the early 1970s, Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hovayda organized the only legal political party in Iran, called the Rasstakhiz (Resurgence) Party. Connected to this instrument of monarchical dictatorship was the Workers Organization of Iran headed by the chief of SAVAK (the secret police agency) General Parnianfar, Minister of Labour, one senator and two representatives of Majeles (the lower house of the monarchical parliament). After the February 1979 revolution, workers took over the offices of the Workers’ Organization of Iran and renamed it Workers’ House. This was a centre for activities of independent workers shoras (councils) and syndicates (trade unions). In September 1979, after a Friday prayer in Tehran a group of government agents armed with clubs attacked the Workers’ House and took it over from workers. Ali Rabbiei, Assistant Director of the Organization for Information and Security of the Islamic Republic, Hossein Kamali, an engineer and a representative in the Parliament and soon after the minister of labour, Sarhadizadeh, Minister of Labour at the time, and Alireza Mahjoob, member of the pro-capitalist Islamic Republic Party (now the head of Workers’ House and a Member of parliament), formed the central leadership of the “occupied” Workers’ House. They registered the Workers’ House based on a political constitution supporting the pro-capitalist agenda of the Islamic Republic regime....

***** For identification purposes.**

For more information, please contact info@workers-iran.org

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI)

www.workers-iran.org

<http://www.etehadbinalmelali.com/INDEXI.htm>

October 14, 2007