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## About IASWI:

The International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) is a progressive, non-partisan campaign in support of workers' rights and struggles in Iran. The IASWI was formed in 1999 and formally launched in January 2000 with the following objectives:

- Support workers' movement demands and struggles in Iran, including the right to organize free and independent labour organizations and the right to strike.
- Strive for an absolute end to the systematic repression, persecution, imprisonment, torture, assassination and execution of labour activists and political opponents in Iran.
- Promote the implementation and enforcement of internationally recognized human and workers' rights and

### **All incarcerated workers shall immediately and unconditionally be freed Harassment and persecution of all labour activists must cease instantly**

On November 12, Mr. Ali Nejati was transferred to Dezful's Fajr prison, based on trumped up charges. He was accompanied to his trial by family and fellow workers. Mr. Nejati, a leading member of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers' Syndicate had already spent six months in jail based on the same bogus charges. While imprisoned new charges were brought up against him, and although he was cleared of all charges in the preliminary court proceedings, subsequently he was sentenced to spend another year in prison. Mr. Nejati is being sent to jail while he's suffering from severe heart ailment, recently had a heart operation. Due to his condition he has to follow a certain daily diet, accompanied by medications, plus monthly check up by his physician.

Mr. Reza Shahabi, the treasurer of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company, has been incarcerated for more than a year and half now. While he's enduring extreme hardship in jail, no verdict has been brought up against him in the past 19 months. Mr. Shahabi also suffers from various ailments, and was recently transferred to a hospital for medical imaging and tests for acute discomfort of shoulders and neck.

Mr. Ebrahim Madadi the Vice-President of Tehran bus workers' Syndicate, has been imprisoned for the past three years. He suffers from severe eye debility and diabetes. While he's in the last months of his sentence, he has not received any medical attention which he is entitled to.

In the case of Mr. Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, member of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations, and a Children's Rights advocate, a suspended sentence of five years, was recently confirmed by a "Court of Appeals." Mr. Ebrahimzadeh has been incarcerated in Evin prison for 17 months now, based on false accusations. He has been under immense psychological and physical pressures.

Mr. Ayat Niafar a well known Iranian Labour activist, and another member of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations was arrested on Monday October 17, 2011 and released on bail on a heavy bail of about US\$92,000.

Mr. Ali Akhavan an associate of The Centre in Defense of Workers' Rights, was arrested at his house in May of this year, sentenced to a year and a half prison term. Based on the ruling handed to his attorney he still had two weeks to report to the prosecutors in Evin prison.

In the cases of Messrs, Sheis Amani, and Sedigh Karimi, - both members of Board of Directors Iranian Workers' Free Trade Union-, annulled sentences from four years ago, were reactivated again, and they were notified as such. Mr. Karimi's father's house was raided for his arrest.

Mr. Kourosh Bakhshandeh, a member of Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations, was sentenced in absentia to a one year suspended sentence. He was arrested August of this year, and freed the next month with a very heavy bail.

The cases above and many other subpoenas issued against labour activists, all indicate an increased level of pressures by capitalist-Islamic regime applied to labour activists and their families. Islamic Republic is fearful of an expansion of workers' protests, assemblies and strikes. It attempts to stifle such an upsurge through: pressuring labour activists, fragmenting the working class through intimidation and division, prevention of independent workers' organizations....

freedoms for all people in Iran.

The IASWI has been working in collaboration with many labour and progressive activists and organizations in Iran and around the world to strengthen worker-to-worker solidarity in defence of workers' rights and struggles in Iran and against the repressive Islamic Republic of Iran and its capitalist and neo-liberal policies and practices.

As an international solidarity campaign in support of workers in Iran, the IASWI has colleagues and branches in North America, Europe and other parts of the world that work collaboratively towards the realization of the above objectives.

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**IASWI Position:**

As an organization in defence of workers' struggles in Iran, IASWI, encourages international solidarity and collaborative efforts by the independent labour organizations and trade unions. This approach in promotion of labour solidarity does not imply any formal or informal consent or agreements, or the sharing of similar ideas and beliefs, on any other issues. Taking this approach into consideration, we will continue to promote worker-to-worker solidarity, contact and cooperate with unions, local, national and

While condemning these repressively criminal acts, IASWI also warns of the dire medical and general conditions of imprisoned workers and holds Islamic Republic responsible for any consequences. All incarcerated workers shall immediately and unconditionally be freed. Harassment and persecution of all Labour activists must instantly cease.

The anti-worker, repressive policies of the IRI and its conspiracies against workers shall be comprehensively neutralized, with an ever more extended class organizing on a national scale. IASWI shall do its share and part in transmitting the voices of workers' protests in Iran through its campaigns.

**International Alliance in support of Workers in Iran  
November 2011**

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**Comments on the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran**

The new report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, was released in September 2011\*. This report addresses many important areas related to the violation of human rights. The report however is silenced on many issues; particularly, it is totally silenced on violations of workers' rights in Iran. Keeping in mind that support for workers' rights in Iran does not only stem from the world wide Iranian community, but also from a most extensive range, global network of International unions and labour formations, active in all five continents. Therefore, as far as documentation of violations of workers' rights in Iran is concerned, there is indeed no lack of resources; unfortunately there have been too many instances and the consequent, corresponding reportage and documentations.

The two most known instances of workers' rights violations that readily come to mind in recent years are The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company and Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers' Syndicate:

The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company: The origin of this union goes back to late 1960's, but the workers decided to revive the syndicate again 2004 after being banned by the Islamic Republic of Iran for more than twenty years. The Bus Workers' Syndicate and its members have been the target of security forces since day one. In the past five years, they have witnessed: A firebombing of their meeting space and office, arrests of over 1000 of their members following their job action in January 2006, raiding homes and physical attack on the union activists including Mansour Osanloo (Syndicate's elected president) in an attempt to cut his tongue, which resulted in extensive operations on his face. Currently he's released after almost four years of imprisonment but still in serious restrictions and cannot do any union activity, all this WITHOUT a single legal reason. Last year his pregnant daughter-in-law was attacked, kidnapped and tortured by plain clothes security men. Many other leadership members of the Syndicate have been incarcerated on totally false charges including but not limited to Mr. Reza Shahabi, the union's treasurer, and Mr. Ebrahim Madadi, the union's vice-president, both continue to be imprisoned in notorious Evin prison while suffering from serious health problems .

Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers' Syndicate : This independent Sugar Cane workers' union was formed through one of the longest, most extended industrial strike in Iranian workers' history. Needless to say since its inception it has been attacked and its leading members sentenced to long prison sentences, Mr. Nejati, an executive board member of the union, has been a constant target and have been incarcerated numerous times. Currently there are many members of the Sugar Cane Workers' syndicate who were sacked from the company and faced prosecution as well, including the union's board members Messrs Ali Nejati, Reza Rakhshan, Feridoun Nikoufard, Ghorban Alipour, Mohammad Heydari Mehr and Jalil Ahmadi.

To the above list we could add the auto workers at Iran Khodro or workers in various cities of Iranian

international labour federations as well as labour and progressive activists, based only on the interests of the working class.

The IASWI does not however support collaboration with governments and other organizations that are directed by and/or financially supported by governments and capitalist institutions in any country. Such collaborations are against the underlying principles of the working class international solidarity and compromise the struggle for the formation of free and independent labour organizations in Iran. Furthermore, such collaborations with states and capitalist institutions would contribute to the subjugation and control of the labour movement in the interest of the capitalist system. In addition, while supporting workers' struggles against the repressive Islamic Republic of Iran, IASWI opposes economic sanctions and military interventions by Western forces/allies against Iran.

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IASWI Newsletter  
Vol 1, No 7  
November 17, 2011

Kurdistan, who became subjects of legal action against them solely because of their labour activities and attendance in May First festivities. More than 120 members of "Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations" have also been a target of security forces in Kurdistan province. 12 members of the Coordinating Committee in Sanandaj (Vafa Ghaderi, Sedigh Sobhani, Yadullah Samadi, Kiomars Ghaderi, Habibollah Kale-Kani, Erfan Naderi, Kaveh Bahrami, Jamal Govili, Vahed Khani, Fayegh Sobhani, Keyvan Sobhani, and Zahir Razavi) were put on trial this year at the Branch 1 of the Islamic Revolution Court, only for the "crime" of demanding formation of workers' organization. Moreover, 6 members of the Coordinating Committee in Sanandaj and Saqez (Mahmoud Salehi, Hossein Moradi, Vafa Ghaderi, Ghaleb Hosseini, Khaled Hosseini, Yadullah Ghotbi) were arrested on May 1, 2011 and released on heavy bails and are expected to be put on trial with the charge of organizing a May Day even.

In the case of Mr. Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a member of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations, and a Children's Rights advocate, a sentence of five years, was recently confirmed by a "Court of Appeals." Mr. Ebrahimzadeh has been incarcerated in Evin prison for 17 months now, based on false accusations. He has been under immense psychological and physical pressures. Members of the Free Union of Workers in Iran have constantly been harassed and persecuted merely for exercising their most basic human rights.

Moreover, teachers' organizations were repressed and a number of teachers, including Hashem Khansar and Rasoul Bodaghi are still in prison.

Another missing part from Shaheed's report was the dastardly execution of the education worker, Farzad Kamangar, and four other Kurdish political prisoners, Mr. Ali Heydarian, Mr. Farhad Vakili, Ms. Shirin Alamhouli and Mr. Mehdi Eslamian, in May 2010. Since Farzad Kamangar was a teacher activist, and a member of the Teachers' Union of Kurdistan Province, not only Education International and many teachers' unions in various countries opposed his sentence but there was also a world-wide campaign for his freedom by Amnesty international and other human rights' groups. After the execution of these five Kurdish political prisoners, a *General Strike* shut down the Kurdistan province.

The situation of the Afghan workers in Iran is particularly alarming. They are stripped of any rights and are probably the most exploited workers of Iran. No human rights or labour standards protects them. The majority of children of Afghan migrant workers are not entitled to the public education. A severe discrimination, propagated by the government, weighs on them.

Unfortunately it would be impossible to provide an accurate panorama as to the field we're discussing. There are extensive documentations by many concerned organizations about the violation of workers' human rights in Iran. IASWI recommends that any reports on violation of human rights, should have a focus on workers' rights according to the universal declaration of human rights and other relevant international laws and agreements. Workers' rights are human rights!

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\* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=a%2F66%2F374&Submit=Search&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a%2F66%2F374&Submit=Search&Lang=E)