

In This Issue:

- Torture of imprisoned labour activists and prosecution and harassment of imprisoned workers' family members continue
- Reza Shahabi's Defence Committee: Shahabi's health worsening
- IASWI condemns mass murder of workers in factory fires in Pakistan
- IASWI strongly condemns the massacre of striking mineworkers in South Africa
- Reports on demonstrations outside South African Embassy
- Send a protest letter to the IRI: Demand the release of detained labour activists

**Torture of imprisoned labour activists and
prosecution and harassment of imprisoned workers' family members continue**



According to a report from the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations (Coordinating Committee), general condition of jailed labor activist Alireza Asgari, a member of the Coordinating Committee, is deteriorating as he is awaiting the verdict of his appeal court. He has been sentenced to one year prison after the security forces raided the general membership meeting of the Coordinating Committee in Karaj on June 15, 2012 and brutally arrested about 60 labour activists. The majority of detainees, after going through serious interrogations, beatings and insults, were released, some on bail still awaiting trials; however, Alireza Asgari was held unjustifiably and then sentenced to one year imprisonment. The Coordinating Committee reports that Mr. Asgari is suffering from an array of physical illnesses: an acute intestine complication; problems in lower vertebrae; a heart condition that mostly effects a paralysis of his left hand; an advanced case of Anemia, that at times makes it difficult for him to even stand up, and various skin reactions like fungus and blisters that constantly itch,...All these illnesses require immediate and prolonged medical care in qualified medical centers. The Coordinating Committee asserts that prior to his arrest, Mr. Asgari was in normal health and had no medical conditions. It is abundantly clear that Alireza Asgari was viciously and violently attacked, and continuously tortured while incarcerated, thus leading to his failing and deteriorating health.

Also according to Reza Shahabi's Defense Committee, Mr. Shahabi's health has also been drastically deteriorated. The Defence Committee reports: After having a major surgery on his neck, and in contrast to all physicians' advice for at least two months on intensive care at home, and a physical inability to withstand any further jail time, he was criminally put back in Ward 350 of Evin Prison. As a result, he has been having serious infections on areas previously operated on. His right hand was in constant pain, and the infections could lead to permanent nerve and spinal cord damages. His situation after transferring from hospital to the prison became much worse than his conditions prior to surgery. Reza Shahabi, the executive board member and treasurer of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran Bus Workers' Company, has been incarcerated since June 2010. He has recently been sentenced to 6 year imprisonment and five year ban on all union activities; the appeal court has confirmed his sentence without giving him due process. Shahabi was severely beaten during his interrogation in detention. As a result, he underwent cervical spine operation on July 24, 2012. Medical doctors are recommending operations on his back as well.

There is also the case of Ms. Shahnaz Sagvand. Her husband is Mr. Ali Nejati, a labour leader and board member of the Haft Tapeh sugarcane workers' syndicate. Ali Nejati has been imprisoned for the second time, in November 2011, this time to serve a one year term. He has been suffering from a host of illnesses including serious heart conditions. He recently had another heart operation. Shahnaz Sagvand has been prosecuted by the judiciary system for her interviews about Nejati's situation. She was put on trial in city of Shoush on September 10, 2012 on the charges of "propaganda against the system through interviews with foreign radios (media sources based outside Iran) and spreading lies and disturbing public opinion". However, the only subject she discussed in those interviews was her incarcerated husband's most dire physical conditions in jail. She has been bonded bail until the verdict is announced.

Moreover, the conditions of imprisoned workers' activists such as: Shahrokh Zamani, Mohamad Jarahi, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, all members of the Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations" remain critical; in spite of a broad international campaign for the release of these labor activists, they are still serving long term sentences on bogus charges from sham courts. Shahrokh Zamani is currently serving 11 year and Mr. Jarahi five-year prison sentences in Tabriz prison. Behnazm Ebrahimzadeh sentenced to five years in prison after conviction of "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security", in connection with his labour activities on behalf of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations.

To add injury to insult, Islamic Republic of Iran has shown no hesitation in pressuring and intimidating incarcerated workers' families not to give any interviews to any media. Judicial harassment of Ms. Shahnaz Sagvand, Ali Nejati's wife, proves just how afraid and insecure this regime feels about a simple interview. The question is whether they would be able to stop millions of angry workers and their families' demands for justice and equality.

IASWI is calling on all workers' medias, workers' Organizations, and all liberated people of the world to report on and condemn all the above cases of Iranian workers maltreatments, and harassment and persecution of even families of jailed workers by the Islamic Republic of Iran. We shall continue to devote a comprehensive international campaign for their freedom, and demand their unconditional and immediate release.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI)
September 13, 2012

Reza Shahabi's health worsening

Communiqué number 37 of Reza Shahabi Defence Committee

After his operation, Reza Shahabi's body developed infections, and his condition is worsening by the day. His amnesty is in indeterminate state.

According to received news, Mr. Reza Shahabi who had gone under major surgery for his neck, and according to doctors' recommendations was in need of at least "two months rest at home", and "incapable of withstanding any further punishment," was sent back to Ward 350 of Evin prison on August 14, 2012.

Since then, his physical problems have only worsened. He has developed infections on the spots where surgery was done, his shoulders and right hand are in great, excruciating pain. His physical conditions have deteriorated so much that currently he is much worse shape than he was before his operations. There's a danger and distinct possibility of major damage to his nerves and spinal cord tissues, because of the growing infections.

Judiciary officials are directly responsible for this situation and worsening of his conditions. These officials have acted exactly opposite to what all physicians had recommended: insisting on Mr. Shahabi's need for total rest at home, and his incapacity to withstand any further punishment. Instead of following doctors' advice, they have returned Mr. Shahabi to confinement.

Also, according to his attorney, Mr. Shahabi's name was on the list of prisoners that were supposed to be pardoned, but that process of being pardoned has been abandoned, without giving him any explanation about his freedom or pardon.

Keeping in mind, Mr. Shahabi's very alarming physical deterioration, increasing infections in areas where the operation was done, distinct possibility of long term damage to his nerves and spinal cord tissues, and the continued excruciating pain he is constantly experiencing, *Reza Shahabi's Defense Committee* is greatly alarmed, and extremely concerned about his deteriorating health. We hold Judiciary and security officials directly responsible for any consequence resulting from this shameful situation.

Reza Shahabi must be immediately released and quickly treated.

Reza Shahabi Defence Committee. k.d.shahabi@gmail.com / www.k-d-shahabi.blogspot.com Translated by IASWI (info@workers-iran.org)

IASWI strongly condemns mass murder of workers in factory fires in Pakistan*



IASWI stands in solidarity with our fellow workers in Pakistan and strongly condemns the employers and the Pakistani government for September 11th fire at two manufacturing companies which killed at least 289 textile workers in Karachi and 25 workers in a shoe factory in Lahore. This tragic incident shocked the whole world. Employers, their Western contractors and the Pakistani governments are fully responsible for the mass murder of workers in these factories.

Since the tragic incident last Tuesday, many Pakistani workers, unions and progressive organizations globally have organized protest actions against lack of enforcement of health and safety regulations in factories and against employers and capitalist governments. Workers are demanding immediate arrests of the owners of the two factories in Lahore and Karachi where fires had killed more than 300 workers. The departments of labour and relevant government institutions seem to have been colluding with factory owners in allowing and enforcing anti-workers policies. This is clearly a criminal negligence of workplace health and safety standards as well as fire safety regulations.

IASWI stand in solidarity with our fellow workers in Pakistan and with families of workers who lost their lives in the two fires. Let's hold all employers, including the factory's Western contractors, as well as the Pakistani government accountable for the loss of 300 workers. All families of the victims of this tragic incident will have to be appropriately compensated by employers and the government.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) September 13, 2012

* PHOTO: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE

IASWI strongly condemns the massacre of striking mineworkers in South Africa



Inhumane Apartheid regime in South Africa which was based on denial of the most basic human rights from Black workers and other black toilers was overthrown about two decades ago due to long term struggles of South African working class and liberated people and the extensive international support of those struggles; however, the exploitive Capitalist system remained secure and intact. In appearance, Apartheid has been overthrown but workers are still being severely exploited and oppressed; they face unemployment and extreme poverty; lose life and limb in work related accidents or preventable diseases, and are murdered by security forces of the Capitalist state.

Since last week, about three thousand mineworkers from the Marikina Platinum Mine near Rustenburg had been on strike for increased wages. The mine is run by Lonmin whose headquarters are in London. Police and the employers had designated Thursday 16th August as return to work day, D-day, to break the strike. On that day police attacked thousands of miners that had assembled on a hill top, and after a few warnings began shooting into ranks of striking workers. According to reports, as a result 34 workers have been killed and hundreds are wounded and arrested.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) supports the struggles of Marikina Platinum Mine

workers, and considers police mass killing of striking workers a criminal act against South African workers and the international working class as a whole. While IASWI expresses its deepest condolences and sympathies with victimized workers and their families, we also urge unity and solidarity of South African working class against Capitalists and their repressive and exploitative world order, the root cause of workers' deaths and miseries, which occurs in many different shapes and forms.

The labour movement in Iran has been a strong supporter of workers' and social justice movements in South Africa for many years. During the 1979 Revolution in Iran, before the repressive Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) took power, which ended in killing of tens of thousands of workers and socialists and progressive people, Iranian oil workers had imposed an embargo against South African Apartheid regime and against the government of Israel in support of Palestinian people's rights. Unfortunately, our revolution was crushed by the IRI and did not succeed in bringing about social and economic justice for the working class as the official end of Apartheid regime in South Africa has not brought prosperity and justice for workers. Therefore, our world-wide struggles against the capitalist system must continue.

IASWI urges all Labor and Human Rights organizations, all labor activists, liberated and equality seeking individuals to strongly condemn the massacre of South African workers by criminal security forces, Capitalists, mining corporations, and South African Capitalist state, in any form they can. Everyone responsible for this massacre must be put on trial and punished accordingly.

International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran (IASWI) August 19, 2012

Report: Demonstration Outside the Consulate of South Africa in Toronto

A rally was organized by labour, community and international solidarity activists on Saturday, August 25, 2012 at 1 pm, outside the Consulate of South Africa in Toronto, in condemnation of the massacre of striking mineworkers and in solidarity with South African workers' movement. The rally, which ended with a march, was initiated and organized by a number of labour and solidarity groups including IASWI-Canada. The following organizations endorsed the rally. CUPE Ontario Division, Ontario Federation of Labour, International Latin American Trade Unionist Coalition Ontario, Latin American & Caribbean Solidarity Network, Network for Pan-African Solidarity, CUPE Locals 3907 and 4772, Racial Justice Committee, CUPE Ontario, International Solidarity Committee, CUPE Ontario, International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran-Canada, Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, Ontario Justicia for Migrant Workers, International Solidarity Committee of the Greater Toronto Workers' Assembly, Labour for Palestine (Toronto), Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA), Socialist Action, Group for Research and Initiatives for the Liberation of Africa (GRILA), Mining Injustice Solidarity Network, Council in Support of People's Struggles in Iran - Toronto, Common Frontiers, Stop the Cuts Network (SCN), Somali Canadian Diaspora Alliance. See a report of the rally below:
<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/johnbon/2012/08/canadians-condemn-south-african-police-killing-44-miners>

IASWI branches in Europe also took part in similar rallies in support our fellow mineworkers in South Africa.

**Justice for the South African miners!
Long live workers' international solidarity!**

Link to: CUPE Ontario: Free Alireza Asgari and Jalil Mohammadi

Link to: Norwegian Transport Workers' Union: Free Alireza Asgari and Jalil Mohammadi

Send a protest letter to the IRI: Demand the release of detained labour activists

Sample Protest letter (updated as of September 15, 2012):

I (we) are writing to protest the continued persecution of labour activist and the gross violation of workers' rights in Iran. We continue to witness many labour activists brutally persecuted and unjustly imprisoned in Iran:

- Reza Shahabi, the executive board member and treasurer of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran Bus Workers' Company, has been incarcerated for more than two years. He has recently been sentenced to 6 year imprisonment and five year ban on all union activities; the appeal court has confirmed his sentence without giving him due process. Shahabi was severely beaten during his interrogation in detention. As a result, he underwent cervical spine operation on July 24, 2012. Medical doctors are recommending operations on his back as well. Contrary to doctors' recommendations, Shahabi was sent back to Ward 350 of Evin prison on August 14, 2012. Since then, his health has been drastically deteriorated.

- Alireza Asgari, labour activist and members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations, was arrested after security forces raided the annual general membership of the Coordinating Committee on June 15, 2012. In total about 60 labour activists were brutally beaten by the security forces and transferred to Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj. The majority of detainees, after going through serious interrogations, beatings and insults, were released, some on bail; however, Alireza Asgari was held unjustifiably and then sentenced to one year imprisonment. Mr. Asgari is suffering from an array of physical illnesses: an acute intestine complication; problems in lower vertebrae; a heart condition that mostly effects a paralysis of his left hand; an advanced case of Anemia, that at times makes it difficult for him to even stand up, and various skin reactions. The Coordinating Committee asserts that prior to his arrest, Mr. Asgari was in normal health and had no medical conditions. I (we) are seriously concerned that Alireza Asgari was tortured while incarcerated, thus leading to his failing and deteriorating health.

- Shahrokh Zamani and Mohammad Jarahi, both from Tabriz and members of the Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers Organizations, a group campaigning for the establishment of independent trade unions in Iran, are currently serving 11- and five-year prison sentences in Tabriz prison, north-west Iran. Shahrokh Zamani, Mohammad Jarahi were all initially arrested in June 2011. Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Tabriz later sentenced Shahrokh Zamani to 11 years and Mohammad Jarahi to five years imprisonment after conviction of charges including "acting against national security by establishing or membership of groups opposed to the system" and "spreading propaganda against the system". Shahrokh Zamani and Mohammad Jarahi were both arrested in mid-January 2012 to begin serving their sentences (Source Amnesty International)

- Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, member of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations, and a Children's Rights advocate has been incarcerated in Evin prison since June 2010. Behnam Ebrahimzadeh was initially sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in December 2010 on national security charges. This was overturned by the Supreme Court, and after a retrial he was sentenced to five years in prison after conviction of "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security", apparently in connection with his labour activities on behalf of The Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations. This sentence was upheld on appeal in October 2011 (Sources: Amnesty International and IASWI).

- Ali Nejati has been incarcerated in Dezfoul's Fajr prison since November 12, 2011. Mr. Nejati, a board 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 currently on medical furlough for treatment of his worsening heart problems and a hearth operation but expected to be transferred to prison shortly. Due to his deteriorating health condition he has to follow a certain daily diet,

accompanied by medications, plus monthly check up by his physician. In addition, Mrs. Shahnaz Sagvand, Ali Nejati's wife, has been prosecuted by the judiciary system for her interviews about Nejati's situation. She was put on trial in city of Shoush on September 10, 2012 on the charges of "propaganda against the system through interviews with foreign radios (media sources based outside Iran) and spreading lies and disturbing public opinion". However, the only subject she discussed in those interviews was her incarcerated husband's most dire physical conditions in jail.

I (we) strongly condemn the unjust arrests and sentences against these labour activists. I (we) also denounce ongoing persecution and arrests of labour activists in Iran. I (we) demand the immediate and unconditional freedom of all detained labour activists in Iran.

Name:

Organization/Position

Please send your protests 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

