

June 24, 2011

A report on June 9th day of action in support of workers in Iran

Four French Trade Union federations, CGT, FSU, Solidaires and UNSA, organized a protest on June 9, 2011 in front of the UN office in Geneva in support of workers in Iran. In addition, this call out was supported by two Swiss trade unions, UNIA and CGAS, and Belgium's FGTB, all of which were present in supporting this action. The 100th ILO annual conference was chosen for this protest, because it was hosting the sham delegation from the regime of Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). The protest called for unconditional freedom of workers in creating their own independent labour organizations, release of all incarcerated labour activists in Iran, and the condemnations of the IRI's violation of ILO's conventions.

Trade unions from Switzerland had called on their members to help hand out leaflets on June 9th from 8:00 am to 10:30 am in support of this protest action, in front of the UN office, and inform the attending delegates of the action in progress. The activists from IASWI responded to this call and together with activists from UNIA and CGAS distributed about three thousand leaflets among delegates. In addition about a thousand copies of IASWI's special bulletin were also distributed.

The protest started at 11:00 a.m. The trade union representatives from a number of countries including Thailand, Suriname, Egypt, Italy, Senegal, South Korea, Germany, France, and Switzerland took part in the rally.

The first speaker, Mr. Jean-Michel Joubier, Head of CGT-France International Department, exposed the brutal, suppressive acts of Islamic Republic of Iran, and once again reaffirmed French workers' solidarity with Iranian workers. He went on to read portions of greetings from Mahmoud Salehi and the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organizations for this occasion.

Mr. Jamshid Pouranpir, UNIA, vice-president CGAS, speaking on behalf of Swiss trade unions, spoke about how IRI consistently violates all conventions of ILO and expressed hope for a continuation of solidarity actions for Iranian workers. He spoke about suppression of women and religious minorities, and condemned IRI's repressive policies.

Alain Baron from Solidaires Syndicate spoke of solidarity with Iranian workers, and his hope that the current movements for freedom and justice across North Africa and Middle East would spread throughout the entire region. He emphasized on the importance of international labour solidarity with workers in the Middle East.

The next speaker, Pierre Coutaz, International, CGT, who himself is an attending trade union representative to ILO from France, began his speech with the memory of a teacher, Farzad Kamangar, and how IRI last year just before ILO's convention executed Farzad Kamangar and four other activists. He cited how the executions were raised in the ILO Commission on Norms, and by submitting reports on the executions and IRI's violation of ILO conventions they were able to considerably expose IRI's crimes. But he expressed regrets that other than some 'reminders' IRI did not face serious penalties, in addition to the fact that the IRI has been elected to be part of the ILO's Governing Body. He emphasized that they will exert maximum pressure on ILO to reconsider their decision to let IRI be part of the Governing Body despite its appalling record on workers' rights violations.

Ms. Corinne Vialle, from FSU France, was the next speaker. She spoke on the recent uprisings in Middle East and North Africa, the necessity of international solidarity amongst workers, and her syndicate's readiness and commitment to be supportive of these struggles. She also expressed discontent about teachers' incarceration by IRI and strongly denounced it.

Vasco Pedrina from UNIA, which is the largest trade union in Switzerland, spoke in support of Iranian workers and strongly condemned the suppression of workers' rights by IRI.

On behalf of Socialist Solidarity with Iranian workers-Paris, Mr. Behroz Arefi expressed his optimism for a continuation of similar actions in support of workers in Iran.

Mr. Bayla Sow of Syndicat Unique des Transports Aériens du Sénégal (SUTAS) was the next speaker. He is also an Executive Board member of the International Transport Workers' Federation. He spoke in support of workers' rights and jailed labour activists in Iran. He also reported on his union's activities in support of workers in Iran.

Leopoldo Tartaglia, International Department, Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), and a delegate to the International Labour Conference, spoke of workers' lack of freedom in creating their own formations in Iran, and expressed CGIL's support for workers in Iran.

Speaking on behalf of IASWI, Mr. Ali Mobareki first thanked all workers' organizations in France for their solidarity with Iranian workers, and creating this opportunity to expose crimes of IRI. He also thanked unions from Switzerland, and all other labour organizations and political parties as well as individuals who supported and joined the protest. Mr. Mobareki noted that workers in Iran will feel very delighted with such an outpouring of international solidarity, and added that such actions would boost workers' resolve to continue struggles for the achievement of their rights until IRI is ultimately brought down. He expressed hope about the positive effects of international labour solidarity.

There was a further message of solidarity from the Action of the CGT-Unemployed in Lyon-France, expressing their full support of workers in Iran. The representative of this organization also gave a report on the event they organized in May 2011 in Lyon in support of Iranian workers.

Two other members of Senegalese trade unions spoke on IRI violation of workers' rights in Iran, and their organizations' continued support for all the incarcerated workers in Iran, and IRI's obligations to respect the Labour accords and agreements it has signed.

The first part of the protest ended with music and chanting. Protesters began chanting in condemnation of IRI and in support of expelling the sham delegates of IRI from ILO. Messages of solidarity from various parties and groups in support of the event and its demands were also read.

Towards the end, Mr. Alain Baron announced that Solidaires Syndicate has received many messages of solidarity for June 9th Protest from workers' organizations in Spain, Italy, Poland, Argentina, Brazil, and Senegal. It should also be mentioned that workers of Iran Khodro, the largest vehicle manufacturing company in Iran, had also sent a statement in support of the protest.

From the beginning to the end, the protest was held in a most comradely atmosphere, and many of the participants viewed it as successful instance of workers' international solidarity and cooperation. IASWI activists from Switzerland, France, England and Sweden participated in this protest, and conducted many interviews with various media outlets.

IASWI once more thanks and honours the French Workers' Collective in Support of Workers in Maghreb and Middle East, Swiss Trade Unions, and all other labour representatives and workers' organizations, especially from Senegal, Italy and other countries, that actively participated in this protest. We hope future campaigns in support of workers in Iran will be carried out in various shapes and forms worldwide. The protest was a lesson on the importance of international solidarity of workers, and a very constructive learning experience for Iranian labour activists as well.

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Links to some reports and interviews:

[Link to reports and interviews in Farsi on June 9, 2011 day of action in Geneva](#)

[Radiolabour interview on June 9, 2011 day of action](#)

[CGAS call out to distribute leaflets to ILO delegates on June 9, 2011](#)

<http://onvauxmieuxqueca.ouvaton.org/spip.php?article1615>

http://www.cgas.ch/SPIP/IMG/pdf/2011-06-09cgas_Iraniens_tract_OIT.pdf

<http://www.aleph-news.net/?p=18293>

<http://agendamilitant.besancon.over-blog.com/article-mobilisation-iran-09-06-geneve-73821146.html>

<http://www.aipazcomun.org/spip.php?article959>

<http://www.cgtra.org/spip.php?article760>

http://paris.indymedia.org/spip.php?article1576&calendrier_mois=9&calendrier_annee=2001

['CGAS-Geneva: labour movement in Geneva in support of June 9th action called by French trade unions](#)

[French trade union collective call for June 9th, 2011 demonstration in support of workers in Iran](#)