



Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network

شبکه همبستگی کارگری

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Defend the Behshahr textile workers on hunger strike

The growing crisis of unpaid wages in Iran is taking in more and more workers every day. For several years Iranian workers have become used to not being paid for many months and have tried to cope by taking on other jobs, moving in with relatives, moving their families out of the towns and cities and so on. Two years ago it was already 'normal' to have workers who had not been paid for as long as 32 months. Today, with no sign of any dampening in the double-figure inflation, and the general deteriorating economic and political situation, over a 100,000 workers have gone without pay for between three to 36 months.

Many of the struggles of the past few years have been based on the basic demand of being paid for work that has already been done. The workers of the chintz making factory in Behshahr, in Mazandaran province in northern Iran, began their struggle for payment of unpaid wages in August 1998. In early April 2003 the workers stepped up their campaign for payment of their wages from 26 months ago.

To further their campaign the workers then went on hunger strike. On 6 May two workers began the hunger strike and were followed by six more on 8 May. Then two days later their number grew to twenty and for twenty days all workers have been on hunger strike! The workers are inside the factory and have been surrounded by the police and security forces. Although the bosses have now agreed to pay 4 billion rials (officially \$4,889,975) the workers have vowed to continue their hunger strike until all of the 50 billion rials has been paid.

We ask you to support the workers of Behshahr textile factory in their struggle to receive their unpaid wages. We urge you to sign this petition and send emails, faxes or letters of protest to the [International Labour Organisation](#) and [President Khatami](#) (details below).

We the undersigned believe that:

- 1- The 1600 workers of Behshahr textiles should be paid their unpaid wages of 27 months immediately.
- 2- The workers should be compensated for the hardship that the non-payment of wages has caused their families.
- 3- The authorities should overlook any actions that the Behshahr workers have taken in securing payment for work that they have already done for the factory owners.
- 4- That the case of the Behshahr textile workers in Mazandaran is symptomatic of a vast section of workers in Iran. Unpaid wages represent daylight robbery - where the bosses do not keep to their side of the labour contract. In the context of the Iranian economy, and no legal

trade unions or the right to strike, it means unbearable hardship for working class families and having to step outside the law to feed their children.

5- That the situation of the Behshahr workers is of concern to all workers and must be taken up by the international labour movement. This is the only type of pressure that can move the Iranian regime towards bringing about a positive outcome.

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Trade unions, trade unionists and local organisations:

Nigel Pearce (NEC, National Union of Mineworkers, personal capacity) - Britain

Phil Waker (NEC, Communication Workers Union, personal capacity) - Britain

Jeremy Dear (National newspapers' organiser, National Union of Journalists, personal capacity) - Britain

Central Committee of the Students' Committee to Defend State Education, CEDEP - Mexico

Struggle Committee of the High School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, CLESIME - Mexico

Francisco Lara, Tenants Organisation, UVVAC - Mexico

Federico Cortes Corona, member of the Mexican Electricians Union, SME - Mexico

Jose' Luis Aguilar, Tenants Organisation Colonia La Estrella, Ecatepec - Mexico

Ramon Campos, member of the trade union of the Mexican Postal Service - Mexico

Miriam Municio, general secretary Spanish Students Union - Spain

XAQUIN G^a SINDE, member of the Regional Executive Committee of CCOO (Workers Commissions union) in Galicia - Spain

Jose' R. Rico and Arturo Llago, members of the Executive Committee of the CCOO shipbuilding workers branch in Ferrol - Spain

Sara Parlavecchia, Committee to Defend State Education, CSP, national leadership - Italy

Political groups, organisations and activists:

Editorial Board Marxist magazine Socialist Appeal (www.socialist.net) - Britain

Editorial Board "In Defence of Marxism" (www.marxist.com) - Britain

Espe Espigares, British organiser, Youth For International Socialism (www.newyouth.com) - Britain

Peter Johnson, national organiser, Youth For International Socialism (www.newyouth.com) - United States

Editorial Board L'Humanite - Canada

Gernot Trausmuth, Editorial board of "Der Funke" - Austria

Eva Nesensohn, chairwoman of the Young Socialists Vorarlberg - Austria

Tanja Kreinbacher and Manuel Kaufmann, Executive Committee of the Young Socialists - Austria

Editorial Board of Militante newspaper - Mexico

Rosalba Ramos, Rank and File Insurgent Movement, Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD - Mexico

Carlo del Angel, Committee for the Socialist Youth, Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD - Mexico

Jose' Luis Ruiz, member of the PRD, Neza - Mexico

Ricardo Nataren Delgado, PRD Committee, Pijijiapan, Chiapas - Mexico

Amauri Solis, PRD Committee Las Margaritas, Pijijiapan, Chiapas - Mexico

Editorial Board Marxist paper El Militante - Spain

Dafnis Stelios: Member PASOK YOUTH Central Committee - Greece

Tsitonis Takis: Member PASOK YOUTH Central Committee - Greece

Karagianopoulos Stamatis: Member of Athens PASOK YOUTH Committee - Greece

Kanelopoulou Christina: Member of Athens PASOK YOUTH Committee - Greece

The Editorial Board of the Danish Social-Democratic paper Socialistisk Standpunkt - Denmark

Claudio Bellotti (Party of the Communist Refoundation, PRC, National Leadership member) - Italy
Antonio Forlano (member of the leadership of the Filt-Cgil union in Milan) - Italy
Dario Salvetti (National Coordination of Communist Youth) - Italy

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Contact details for your protest emails, faxes and letters

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[Emails are the best way to get your message to Mr Khatami.]
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Mr Mohammad Khatami,
The Presidency,
Palestine Avenue,
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