

Open Letter on Jailed Trade Unionists in Iran

Since May Day 2022, members of teachers' unions and the bus workers' union have been arrested, falsely charged and subjected to interrogation.

The Union of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Vahed Syndicate) issued a statement on May 16, 2022 and emphasized that, as part of the independent labour movement in Iran, it has a full right and duty to be in solidarity with all sections of the working class in Iran and around the world. In the spirit of international solidarity, we stand by that right.

According to the Coordination Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations, 230 teachers have been arrested in Iran in the past two months. They have issued numerous statements demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all arrested teachers including Eskandar Lotfi, Rasoul Bodaghi, Shaban Mohamamdi, Masoud Nikkhah, Jafar Ebrahimi, Mohammad Habibi, Asghar Amirzadegan, Mojgan Bagheri, Mohammad Alishvandi, Mohammad Ali Zahmatkesh, Abdolrazaq Amiri, Hamid Abbasi, Gholamreza Gholami Kondazi, Iraj Rahnama, Majid Karimi and Masoud Farhikhteh.

Reza Shahabi, an activist with the Union of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company in Tehran, has also been arrested. He suffers from poor health and has been detained in Ward 209 of Evin Prison, having been subjected to a number of interrogations since his was arrested. Another union activist, Hassan Saeidi, has been on hunger strike.

Workers' rights activist Valeh Zamani has been detained for over 40 days in Evin Prison. Zamani suffers from hepatitis C and liver disfunction. He has been denied his medication and subjected to hours of interrogation.

The Families of Detained Teachers stated in an open letter that they reserve the right to take legal action against the unjust arrests as well as all defamation by state-run media until justice prevails.

We reaffirm that the government of Iran must immediately and unconditionally release all jailed teachers and trade union activists who have been arrested since May Day 2022, including Rasoul Bodaghi, Eskandar Lofi, Reza Shahabi, Jafar Ebrahimi, Hassan Saeidi, Anisha Asadollahi, Reyhaneh Ansarinejad, Mohammad Habibi, Keyvan Mohtadi, Shaban Mohammadi, Masoud Nikkhah, and Hadi Sadeghzadeh and many others.

We call on the labour movement and all defenders of oppressed people around the world to strongly condemn the Iranian government's escalating violation of workers' rights, the right to organize and freedom of association. We demand the Iranian government end the ongoing detention and harassment, and that it unconditionally drop all the charges off against imprisoned trade unionists and their immediate release.

Sincerely,

The Labour May Day Committee
July 26, 2022