

URGENT ACTION

JAILED TRADE UNIONIST'S HEALTH AT RISK

Iranian trade unionist Reza Shahabi, held in Tehran's Evin Prison, is in urgent need of medical care that he cannot obtain in prison. He is serving a six-year prison sentence. Reza Shahabi is a prisoner of conscience who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Reza Shahabi (also known as Reza Shahabi Zakaria), treasurer of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (*Sherkat-e Vahed*), was taken to Imam Khomeini Hospital outside of Evin Prison on 19 October 2013 for severe back pain and numbness in his left foot. He has had chronic back pain since surgery was performed on his spine in May 2012 and he has received "injections" from prison medical officials for the pain, though the underlying condition appears to have not been treated.

Hospital doctors concluded Reza Shahabi required care outside of prison and said that without further treatment he may suffer paralysis on the left side of his body. Doctors have written to the prison administration and the office of the Prosecutor of Tehran of their diagnosis that Reza Shahabi requires medical care outside of prison

Reza Shahabi has previously gone on several hunger strikes in protest at the Iranian authorities' treatment of him and other prisoners, including denial of medical leave. He ended a 22-day hunger strike on 7 January 2013 before being released on medical leave in protest at the Iranian authorities' denial of his repeated requests for leave. His medical leave ended on 15 April 2013. Medical leave is temporary release from prison for medical treatment.

Reza Shahabi is serving a six-year prison sentence in Section 350 of Evin Prison after being convicted in April 2012 of "gathering and colluding against state security" and "spreading propaganda against the system" by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, charges connected to his trade union activities. He has also been fined 70 million rials (US\$5,700) and banned from all trade unionist activities for five years. In July 2012 Branch 36 of Tehran's Appeal Court upheld his sentence.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English, or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Reza Shahabi immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for his peaceful trade unionists activities;
- Urging them to ensure that Reza Shahabi is given without further delay access to the medical treatment required for his condition outside of prison.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 DECEMBER 2013 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid
Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: media@rouhani.ir
Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English) and
@Rouhani_ir (Persian)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

JAILED TRADE UNIONIST'S HEALTH AT RISK

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 2 November 2013 a number of political prisoners in Evin Prison began a "wet" hunger (taking water but not food) strike in protest at the Iranian authorities' denial of adequate medical care to sick prisoners. Those on hunger strike include lawyer Abdolfattah Soltani, a co-founder of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD). Amnesty International understands the hunger strike has spread to Raja'i Shahr Prison in Karaj, west of Tehran.

The Union (or Syndicate) of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed) was banned after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Workers resumed the union's activities in 2004, although it is not legally recognized. On 22 December 2005, police arrested 12 of the union's leaders at their homes, but soon released four of them. Other members were arrested three days later after they went on strike to call for the release of their colleagues. Hundreds more were arrested during a further strike in January 2006 (see Amnesty International, *Iran: Arbitrary arrest/possible prisoner of conscience/medical concern: Mansour Ossanlu* (MDE 13/002/2006), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2006/en> and Amnesty International, *Iran: Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ incommunicado detention/ possible prisoners of conscience* (MDE 13/008/2006), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/008/2006/en>).

Reza Shahabi was arrested in June 2010. Detained incommunicado for some weeks, he later contacted his family and told them he was being held in Tehran's Evin Prison. In September 2010, after the authorities announced Reza Shahabi could be released on bail, his family paid the required 600 million rials (US\$50,000) only to have the authorities demand a further sum equivalent to US\$100,000. He began a hunger strike on 4 December 2010 in protest at his continued detention. Seven days later, Reza Shahabi was hospitalized as his health deteriorated. Due to his continuing poor health, Reza Shahabi ended his hunger strike on 19 December 2010. On 22 November 2011 Reza Shahabi began another hunger strike which lasted 30 days. Following hospitalization and requests from supporters and fellow trade unionists, Reza Shahabi ended his hunger strike.

Other trade unionists have been arrested or harassed, including members of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Company (HTSCC) Trade Union, which is also not recognized by the government. Ali Nejati, a former leader of the HTSCC Trade Union, was arrested on 12 November 2011 and taken to Dezful Prison to begin serving a one-year sentence related to his peaceful trade union activities. He was released on 24 September 2012 after completing his sentence. On 20 October 2012, he was summoned to Branch One of the Office of the Prosecutor in Shoush in the western province of Khuzestan for questioning. It appears that this was because he had given a speech in Iran's Kordestan province and sang a "provocative" folksong. He was summoned once more on 31 December 2012 to Branch Four of the Office of the Prosecutor in Sanandaj regarding the same case. Ali Nejati's wife, Shahnaz Nejati, who is also a member of the HTSCC Trade Union board, was arrested on 27 November 2011 by members of the Ministry of Intelligence in Khuzestan province. She was released 24 hours later. On 28 October 2012, Branch 102 of the General Court of Shoush acquitted her of charges of "spreading propaganda against the system", "publishing lies", and "causing unease in the public mind". In November 2012, Shahnaz Nejati received a summons ordering her to go to Branch Two of Dezful Revolutionary Court on 15 December 2012. Amnesty International understands that she has been informed that she is charged with "propaganda against the system", though the outcome of this trial is not clear.

Rasoul Bodaghi, a member of the Tehran Teachers' Trade Association, was arrested in September 2009. He was sentenced to six years in prison for "spreading propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding against national security". In January 2011, an Appeal Court confirmed Rasoul Bodaghi's sentence and banned him from taking part in any civil society activities for five years. According to reports, he was severely beaten by two prison officers in May 2010.

Name: Reza Shahabi
Gender m/f: m

UA: 306/13 Index: MDE 13/043/2013 Issue Date: 7 November 2013