

URGENT ACTION

FOUR TRADE UNIONISTS REMAIN IN DETENTION

Morteza Komsari and Ali Akbar Nazari, leading members of an independent but unrecognized trade union in Iran, were released in late December. Four others remain in custody.

Morteza Komsari and Ali Akbar Nazari were released on bail on 29 December 2010 after almost two months in detention. They are likely to face trial in the future.

It is believed that **Gholamreza Gholamhosseini**, another member of the trade union arrested around the same time as the two released, remains in detention without charge or trial. Another, **Reza Shahabi**, the Treasurer of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed), held since 12 June 2010, ended his two-week long hunger strike in protest at his continued detention on 19 December 2010. He had been hospitalized after seven days when his health deteriorated. A trial session scheduled for 26 December 2010 was postponed as his lawyer had not had sufficient time to review his client's file. Amnesty International believes both men are prisoners of conscience, held solely for their peaceful trade union activities, and should be released immediately and unconditionally. Two further members of the trade union, **Mansour Ossanlu and Ebrahim Maddadi**, respectively head and deputy head of the union, are currently serving prison sentences; both are prisoners of conscience. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests", and to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the "right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice".

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Welcoming the release of Morteza Komsari and Ali Akbar Nazari but urging the Iranian authorities to drop any charges against them relating solely to their peaceful trade union activities;
- Urging the authorities to release the other detained members of the same union (naming them) if, as appears, they are held solely for their peaceful trade union activities, or else to bring them to trial promptly and fairly on recognizable criminal charges;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that those held are protected from torture or other ill-treatment, and are granted immediate access to their families, to lawyers of their choice, and to adequate medical care;
- Urging the authorities to uphold their obligations to allow the right to form and join independent trade unions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 MARCH 2011 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir or
bia.judi@yahoo.com
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in Tehran
Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17, No. 152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to:
Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
High Council for Human Rights
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir (In subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 130/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/109/2010/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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, including Mansour Ossanlu, but quickly released four of them. Other members were arrested on 25 December 2005 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 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2006/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/008/2006/en>).

Reza Shahabi was arrested in June 2010 three days after the arrest of Saeed Torabian, the union's spokesperson. Held incommunicado detention for some weeks, he later contacted his family and told them he was being held in Evin Prison, Tehran. In September, 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 after starting his hunger strike, Reza Shahabi was hospitalized as his health deteriorated. Due to his continued poor health, Reza Shahabi ended his hunger strike on 19 December 2010. Reza Shahabi is believed to still be detained in Evin Prison's Section 209, which is controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence.

Mansour Ossanlu and Ebrahim Madadi, the head and deputy head of the union respectively, are currently serving prison sentences for their peaceful trade union activities. Mansour Ossanlu is serving a five-year prison sentence and is currently held in poor conditions in Reja'i Shahr Prison, in Karaj, near Tehran. He was tried on fresh charges in August 2010 and received another year's prison sentence, to be added to the five years he was already serving. Ebrahim Madadi has been held in Evin Prison, Tehran, since December 2008, serving a three-and-a-half year prison term imposed in 2007. Both are prisoners of conscience. Saeed Torabian and Reza Shahabi were suspended from work, without pay, for approximately four years following the strikes in 2005. They were eventually reinstated after the Court of Administrative Justice investigated their case. This Court is empowered to investigate complaints against government employees.

Other trade unionists have been arrested or harassed recently, including members of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Company (HTSCC) Trade Union, also not recognized by the government. The union's Leader, Reza Rakhshan, began serving a six-month prison sentence on 3 January 2011 imposed by an appeals court for "spreading lies", after he had been acquitted of this charge by a lower court, apparently in connection with an article he wrote in December 2009 entitled "We are One Family", condemning arrests and harassment of his fellow workers. On 18 November 2010, three members of the Haft Tapeh Trade Union were sentenced to six months in prison by the Ahvaz Appeals Court. Behrouz Nikoufard, Alireza Sa'eedi and Behrouz Molazadeh were reportedly convicted of "insulting the Leader", although none is believed to have begun serving their sentence yet.

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