

URGENT ACTION

IMPRISONED TRADE UNIONIST ON HUNGER STRIKE

Reza Shahabi, a leading member of an independent but unrecognized trade union in Iran, remains detained in Evin Prison, Tehran, where he has begun a hunger strike. Although Saeed Torabian, another leading member, was released on 20 July, other union members have since been arrested, bringing the total in prison to six.

Reza Shahabi, the Treasurer of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (*Sherkat-e Vahed*), was arrested on 12 June, 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. He began a hunger strike on 4 December in protest at his continued detention.

Union members Gholamreza Gholamhosseini, Morteza Komsari and Ali Akbar Nazari have all been arrested since the beginning of November. Amnesty International believes that all four men are probably prisoners of conscience, held solely on account of their peaceful trade union activities, in which case they should be released immediately and unconditionally. 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, Article 22 (1) of which states: "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, Article 8 of 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:

- Urging the Iranian authorities to release Reza Shahabi and other recently 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 authorities to release Mansour Ossanlu and Ebrahim Maddadi immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on the authorities to uphold their obligations to allow the right to form and join independent trade unions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JANUARY 2011 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
[care of] Public relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street
intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website: <http://www.bia-judiciary.ir/tabid/62/Default.aspx> ; **2nd box (starred)=first name, 3rd box (starred)=family name, 5th box (starred)=email address, last box=substance of message**
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
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
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 first update of UA 130/10. Further information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/063/2010/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

IMPRISONED TRADE UNIONIST ON HUNGER STRIKE

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 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. Saeed Torabian was among those arrested, and spent one month in custody. 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>)

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 is 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, was recently sentenced to six month's imprisonment 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 entitled "We are One Family", condemning arrests and harassment of his fellow workers.

Further information on UA: 130/10 Index: MDE 13/109/2010 Issue Date: 10 December 2010

