

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN TRADE UNIONISTS HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Saeed Torabian and Reza Shahabi, leading members of a trade union which is not recognized by the authorities in Iran, have been arrested and are held at unknown locations. Their arrests may be connected to the anniversary of the disputed 2009 presidential election, which fell on 12 June. The two detained men are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Saeed Torabian, the Public Relations Officer for the Board of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (*Sherkat-e Vahed*), was arrested at his home on 9 June, by security officials who also confiscated his computer and mobile phone. Reza Shahabi, the Treasurer of the Union, was arrested on 12 June. When he arrived at work he was summoned to the headquarters of the Bus Company, where he was arrested by security officials. They took him to his house, which they searched, and confiscated his computer.

Amnesty International believes that both men are very likely to be prisoners of conscience, held solely on account of their peaceful trade union activities and is concerned that they are held in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance, which facilitates the use of torture or other ill-treatment.

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:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to disclose the whereabouts of Saeed Torabian and Reza Shahabi immediately;
- Urging the authorities to release them if they are held solely for their peaceful trade union activities;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that the two men are protected from torture or other ill-treatment while in custody, and are granted immediate access to their families, to lawyers of their choice, and to adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2010 TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>

First starred box: your given name;

second starred box: your family name;

third: your email address

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

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject

line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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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 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 UA 08/06, MDE 13/002/2006, and UA 26/06, MDE 13/008/2006, and updates)

Two other members of the Union's board, Mansour Ossanlu and Ebrahim Maddadi, 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. Ebrahim Maddadi is held in Evin Prison, Tehran, serving a three-year prison term imposed in 2007. Both are prisoners of conscience.

Saeed Torabian and Reza Shahabi had been suspended from work, without pay, for about 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 local Teachers' Trade Associations, particularly in the run-up to International Labour Day on 1 May and National Teachers' day on 2 May 2010. Some of them were summoned by security officials, and some were detained for several hours, while the houses of others were searched, and some union meetings were broken up by the authorities.

The Iranian authorities refused permission for demonstrations to be held on the anniversary of the presidential election, and arrests of political activists, human rights defenders, students, trade unionists and others increased in the days and weeks before the anniversary. Some people defied a heavy security presence to demonstrate on the streets of Tehran. At least 91 people were arrested in connection with demonstrations, according to the Tehran Police Commander.

Protests at the disputed outcome of the 2009 election were violently repressed, with scores killed. Thousands were arrested, many of whom were tortured or otherwise ill-treated, often to obtain forced "confessions". Hundreds have been tried unfairly, including in mass "show trials", many of whom are serving long-prison terms, often as prisoners of conscience. Some have been sentenced to death, and two executed.

For further information please see, From Protest to Prison: Iran One Year after the Election, (Index MDE 13/062/2010), June 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2010/en> and Iran: Election Contested, Repression Compounded (Index MDE 13/123/2009), December 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>.

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