

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: ACT 73/001/2008 (Public)  
Date: 11 April 2008

## **International Trade Union Confederation: Amnesty International saddened by the loss of human rights defender Janek Kuczkiewicz**

Amnesty International is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of Janek Kuczkiewicz who passed away at his home in Brussels on 7 April. Amnesty activists and especially those working on the human rights of trade unionists join us in mourning this loss.

Janek was Director for Human and Trade Union Rights of the International Trade Union Confederation, and for decades a close colleague and friend to Amnesty International and scores of activists. He was a passionate human rights defender, endowed with an optimism deeply rooted in a sharp sense of justice. Janek's thirst for life meant he took brave decisions and also gave him a hearty laugh if his efforts came undone. Amnesty will sorely miss his friendship and solidarity but his life's work is a celebration of human and trade union rights.

Janek led the ITUC's contribution to two global days of trade union and human rights action, in 2007 and 2008, aimed at securing freedom for two Iranian TU activists, Mansour Ossenlu (or, Osanloo) and Mahmoud Salehi. Both actions served to underscore the link between Trade Unions and Amnesty and build international solidarity.

Less than a week ago Janek was a keynote speaker at Amnesty UK's Trade Union Conference in Nottingham. In his contribution, he was as witty as he was wise – relishing the opportunity to build mutual solidarity and frank in his terms. It was classic, thoughtful, Janek at his best, speaking with authority and enthusiasm about union activism on human rights and the scope for collaboration and, as usual, he won over his crowd. A debonair activist with serious intent.

The funeral will be held at the church of Saint Joseph in Wezembeek-Oppem, Brussels on 12 April at 11am. Amnesty International will be represented by Shane Enright, of Amnesty's UK section.

Irene Khan, Secretary General, Amnesty International

### **Further information**

Please visit the ITUC's page - <http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1965> to send your condolences.

There is a photo memorial - including images from his time with AIUK activists last week, and with imprisoned Iranian trade unionist, Mansour Ossenlu, at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/freeosanloo/sets/72157604444075006/>

To learn more about the ITUC's campaign for the freedom of Iranian TU activists, please see:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?page=recherche&recherche=salehi>

Public Document

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