



Letter from the Independent Iranian Workers Union (IIWU) to the international section of labor unions regarding the widespread suppression of workers by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Dear Colleagues and members of labour organizations worldwide,

With warm greetings,

Throughout its tenure, the government of the Islamic Republic has consistently engaged in extensive suppression against workers, educators, retirees, and all groups of hardworking wage earners, as well as their independent organizations.

This systematic and relentless oppression takes place as the government subjects workers to extremely exploitative and inhumane conditions, imposing these conditions on their overall livelihood and work environment. The government refuses to tolerate any level of trade union activity and demands made by workers, educators, retirees, and other sectors of society. Instead, it resorts to accusations, security charges, arrests, and imprisonment of workers, educators, retirees, and supporters of the working class.

This severe form of suppression occurs while the government presents false representatives each year under the guise of worker representation to international forums. Through the government's distorted portrayals of working and living conditions for Iran's working class, they attempt to silence our voices from reaching you and other international labor and human rights organizations.

Unfortunately, the Islamic Republic has succeeded in this regard. Despite numerous reports and complaints from a few independent labor organizations within the country, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has not classified the Iranian government as a violator of workers' rights.

Therefore, by disseminating and forwarding this report, which sheds light on various aspects of the absolute lack of rights for workers and their oppression, we strive to inform our colleagues in different countries, labor unions, and international organizations about the dire situation of workers in Iran. We request that this report, along with our previous correspondences, be registered as blatant violations of workers' human rights within the framework of the ILO's records.

Nasrin Javadi, a 66-year-old retired worker and a member of IIWU, was detained during a gathering for International Workers' Day in front of the Parliament in 2019. After 29 days in detention, she was released on bail. Subsequently, Judge Afshari at the 26th branch of the Revolutionary Court sentenced her to 7 years in prison and 74 lashes on charges of assembly and collusion to act against national security, disrupting public order and peace, and spreading propaganda against the system. This verdict was confirmed by the appellate court and the Supreme Court. The baseless charges against Nasrin Javadi include her participation in International Workers' Day events, attending labor and retiree gatherings and rallies to advocate for labor-related demands. Despite suffering from multiple illnesses and receiving repeated prescriptions and recommendations from specialist doctors at public hospitals attesting to her inability to tolerate imprisonment, she was transferred to Evin Prison by the 1st branch of the Execution of Sentences Court on July 2, 2022 and remains imprisoned without furlough for medical treatment.

In recent years, individuals such as Jafar Azimzadeh, Shapour Ehsani-Rad, Parvin Mohammadi, Mozafar Salehnia, Sharif Saedpanah, Sheis Amani, Heydar Ghorbani, Nahid Khodajo, Farhad Sheikhi, Javanmir Moradi, and many others, both current and former members of our union, have been repeatedly detained and imprisoned due to their labor activities.

Members of the IIWU have faced government security forces' hostility and have never been granted the freedom to engage in lawful and unrestricted activities since its inception. The scope of detentions and imprisonments of union members spans over 17 years, including numerous cases like those of Sedigh Karimi, Khaled Savari, Hussein Qaderi, Jamil Mohammadi, Foad Keykhosravi, Tayeb Molayi, Hadi Soleimani, Mehdi Fakhri, Khalil Karimi, and several others who have been detained and imprisoned for their membership in the IIWU and their trade union activities.

The range of assault and suppression against workers in Iran doesn't solely encompass the IIWU but extends far beyond it to encompass all labor and teacher organizations, as well as workers in various production and service centers and supporters of workers.

For instance, during the strike by workers on a project in the oil, gas, and petrochemical industries that took place in April 2023, nearly a hundred thousand workers across different locations participated in the strike. Many activists involved in the strike were arrested, and accurate data about their fate is still not available.

A significant number of workers from Isfahan Steel Complex (zob ahan) were arrested after two rounds of strikes in November and December 2022, and legal cases have been filed against them.

The detention and suppression of workers in organizations such as Soungoun Varzaghan Copper Complex, Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-Industry, Ahvaz National Steel Group, Hepco Factory, Chador Malu Mine, and numerous other factories and companies are among other instances of worker suppression in Iran.

Workers, teachers, and retired employees who voice objections regarding poor living conditions and low wages and engage in continuous protest gatherings have been attacked multiple times by government forces. Several have been arrested and received prison sentences. Farzaneh Zilabi, a lawyer representing some workers and retirees, has recently been sentenced to prison for defending workers' and retirees' rights in court.

The government has suppressed even the most vulnerable in society through various avenues, namely: the removal of the budget for supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities and physical impairments in the suggested government's by-law; the municipality's decision to privatize the transportation for disabled individuals; the mobilization of security forces to instill fear and intimidation during protests by disabled individuals who often participate in these gatherings using wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, and with the assistance of others, and the failure to provide welfare services and facilities to create employment opportunities for these individuals.

A deep-rooted poverty burden imposed on society has led to the spread of child labor phenomenon, yet the government takes no action to prevent child labor and improve the conditions of families forced to have their children work and obstructs the efforts of child rights activists.

Female workers in Iran are subjected to multiple forms of oppression, with no welfare facilities implemented for them. The government obstructs the establishment of independent workers' organizations, hindering women workers' demands for improved working conditions.

Over 250 teachers across various cities in Iran, who are members of the Coordination Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations and various provincial teachers' associations, have been detained or sentenced to prison terms over the past two years, or they have pending legal cases. Here are the names of some of them:

Esmail Abdi, born in 1974, an official secretary of education in Islamshahr with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and 21 years of teaching experience. He is a former member and secretary-general of the Iranian Teachers' Association and has been in prison since November 2016. He is currently imprisoned in Kachoui Karaj prison.

Rasoul Bodaghi, a teacher and a member of the board of directors of the Iranian Teachers' Association. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Educational Management and has around 30 years of experience in education. After the public protests of 2009, Rasoul Bodaghi was arrested and expelled from the education system, causing his teaching rights to be revoked. Following years of enduring imprisonment from 2009 to 2015, during which he did not have even a single day of leave and experienced multiple detentions, he was once again arrested on April 30, 2022. He has remained in prison since then. Rasoul Bodaghi is currently serving a long-term prison sentence for multiple legal cases related to his trade union and political activities.

Aziz Ghasemzadeh, a teacher and spokesperson for the Teachers' Association in Gilan. He was detained on October 4, 2021, and sentenced to one year in prison by the Revolutionary Court of Rasht. He began serving his sentence in Lakan prison in Tehran on April 8, 2023.

Jafar Ebrahimi, a teacher and inspector for the Coordination Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations was arrested on April 30, 2022. He was sentenced to four years and six months in prison for charges including, "propaganda against the regime" by the Revolutionary Court of Karaj.

Asghar Amirzadegan, a retired teacher, has been detained multiple times by security institutions in Shiraz. He was sentenced to five years of imprisonment by the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz.

Fatemeh Tadrissi, a teacher, was detained on May 09, 2023, for participating in a peaceful teachers' gathering in Tehran. She was transferred to Garchak Varamin prison.

Zeinab Hamrang Seyyed Begloo was arrested on March 12, 2023, by security forces in Tehran and sentenced to five years in prison for "gathering and collusion" without access to a lawyer. She is imprisoned in Evin prison.

Farzaneh Nazaranpour, a teacher residing in Tehran, was detained at the end of winter in 2022, and was sentenced to ten months in prison for charges like "propaganda against the regime" by the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. She was released from Evin prison on July 02, 2023, under electronic surveillance.

Nahid Shirpisheh is an imprisoned teacher and the mother of Pouya Bakhtiari, one of the victims of the November 2019 protests, who is currently in prison. She was detained on July 11, 2022, by security forces. Mrs. Shirpisheh was tried by Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Karaj on charges including "assembly and collusion" and "propaganda against the system." She was sentenced to five years in prison for these charges.

Anoush Adeli, a member of the board of directors of the Teachers' Association in Gilan, was arrested on June 15, 2022. This imprisoned teacher was sentenced to one year of imprisonment for charges of "propaganda against the system" by Branch 18 of the Provincial Review Court of Gilan. This sentence was confirmed by Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court of Rasht. Anoush Adeli has been serving this sentence in Lakan prison in Rasht since April 8, 2023.

Mahmoud Sedighi Pour, a teacher and a member of the board of directors of the Teachers' Association in Gilan, was arrested on June 15, 2022, and sentenced to one year in prison by the Revolutionary Court of Rasht. He is serving his sentence in Lakan prison.

Mehdi Fathi, an activist among the teachers of Fars Province, has been sentenced to eight and a half years in prison, two years of exile, and a travel ban. He was detained on June 8, 2022, and transferred to Adel Abad prison in Shiraz.

Sara Siyahpour, a teacher and activist, was sentenced to six years in prison and a two-year ban on leaving the country by Judge Salavati of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. She is currently free on bail.

Mahmoud Malaki, a member of the board of directors of the Teachers' Association in Bushehr, was detained on June 24, 2022, after visiting the judiciary office.

Hashem Khastar and Javad Lal Mohammadi are teachers who have been imprisoned for several years in Vakilabad prison in Mashhad.

Three members of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, namely Reza Shahabi, Davood Razavi, and Hassan Saeedi, have been imprisoned since April 2022. They have received heavy prison sentences as follows:

Davood Razavi, a retired worker and a member of the board of directors of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company was arrested on September 27, 2022. He was transferred to Evin Prison's Ward 209. He was sentenced by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran to five years of imprisonment and a two-year ban on engaging in online activities, participating in political groups, and parties. The charge against this member of the board of directors of Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company was "assembly and collusion against national security." The alleged actions that led to this charge include his membership in the syndicate, participating in demonstrations outside the Parliament and the City Hall to advocate for workers' demands such as housing rights, attending meetings of the International Labour Organization, interacting with other syndicate members, and meeting with two French labor unionist teachers.

Reza Shahabi, a member of the board of directors of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, was arrested on May 12, 2022, by security forces at his home. He was sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. Due to the application of Islamic Penal Code Article 134, which stipulates that the harshest sentence will be enforced, he will serve 5 years of imprisonment. Despite his deteriorating physical condition and urgent need for medical treatment outside of prison, Mr. Shahabi has been detained in Evin Prison since his arrest and is currently serving his sentence there.

Hassan Saeedi is a member of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company who was arrested on May 18, 2022, when security forces raided his residence. He has been in prison since then. This imprisoned worker was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court to five years in prison and a two-year ban on participating in political groups and parties, as well as using smartphones. The charges against him include "propaganda activities against the system" and "disrupting public order."

Alireza Saghafi and Haleh Safarzadeh, members of the Center for Workers' Rights Defenders, were also arrested multiple times and imprisoned in recent years during the crackdown on independent labor organizations. However, they have been released at the present time.

In recent years, many independent labor activists have been detained and imprisoned by government security institutions. The name of some of these imprisoned activists are mentioned below.

Arash Johari, a labor activist, was arrested on October 6th, 2020, by agents of the Revolutionary Guards' Intelligence in Tehran. This detained worker has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for the charge of "managing unlawful groups with the aim of disrupting national security," 5 years in prison for the charge of "gathering and collusion,"

and 1 year in prison for the charge of "propaganda activities against the regime." According to the law on cumulative sentencing, the total sentence of 7 years and 6 months is executable. Despite his poor physical condition and urgent need for medical treatment outside of prison, this labor activist is serving his imprisonment period in Evin Prison's Ward 4.

Abas Deris, an imprisoned laborer, was born in 1973 in Abadan and resides in Bandar Mahshahr. He was one of the protesters of the November 2019 protests and witnessed the massacre of protesters in Mahshahr. Abas Deris and his brother Mohsen Deris were arrested by the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and were subsequently sentenced to death on charges of "enmity against God." Abas Deris is a father of three children named Ali, Mehdi, and Mohammad. Kafaye Hazbavi, Abas Deris's wife, suffered a cerebral stroke due to the immense psychological pressure after pursuing Abas Deris's case and learning about the possibility of his execution. She later passed away. Despite the halt in the execution of the death sentence, Abas Deris is still at risk of facing execution. Mohsen Deris, his brother, has also been sentenced to a long prison term and is currently imprisoned.

Keyvan Mohtadi, born in 1986, is a writer, translator, labor activist, and a member of the Iranian Writers Association. Keyvan Mohtadi graduated with a degree in metallurgical engineering from Sharif University of Technology. From his youth and during his student years, he has been involved in activities related to workers' rights, child labor, and social issues. In April 2022, he was arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Intelligence Organization and was tried in the Revolutionary Court. He was sentenced to a total of 6 years in prison on charges of "collusion and conspiracy against national security" and "propaganda against the system." This sentence was upheld verbatim in the appeals court.

Anisha Asadollahi is a graduate of Khaje Nasir University. She is a writer, translator, and labor activist. In April 2023, the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran arrested Anisha Asadollahi and transferred her to Evin Prison. After a period of time, she was released from prison temporarily on bail. On July, 2023, Anisha Asadollahi went to Evin Prison to serve a 5-year and 6-month prison sentence, of which 5 years are executable. She remains in prison to this day.

Mehran Raouf, a labor activist, was arrested by security forces in Tehran on October 16, 2020. On April 27, 2021, he was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months in prison by Judge Eiman Afshari, at Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court.

Nahid Taghavi, a 66-year-old labor activist, was arrested by security forces at her home in Tehran on October 16, 2020. Mrs. Taghavi had previously undergone surgery and also suffers from high blood pressure. On April 27, 2021, this labor activist was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months of suspended imprisonment by Judge Eiman Afshari at Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court.

Sarvenaz Ahmadi is a graduate in social work from the University of Welfare Sciences and a labor and children's rights activist. On November 6, 2022, Sarvenaz Ahmadi, along with her husband Kamyar Fakour, was arrested. They were released from prison one month later on bail of 500 million Toman. Subsequently, she was sentenced to 6 and a half years in prison at the initial trial, which was later reduced to 3 and a half years upon appeal. Currently, this labor and children's rights activist is serving her sentence in Evin Prison.

Narges Mansouri is a political activist and former employee of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, who has been sentenced to 5 years in prison due to her political activities.

Kamyar Fakoor, a labor activist, artist, and journalist, was sentenced to one year in prison for his labor activities and on charges of propaganda against the system. He is currently imprisoned in Evin Prison's Ward 8. Prior to this, Kamyar Fakoor had been arrested and imprisoned several times due to his labor activities and participation in workers' gatherings.

Ali Al-Ishagh, a tailor, poet, and labor activist, was detained in late Aban 1398 (November 2019) at his personal residence by security forces and transferred to prison. The court session regarding the charges against Ali Al-Ishagh was held in Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, and this imprisoned worker was sentenced to 5 years of suspended imprisonment.

Sepideh Gholian, a labor activist who was arrested during the protests of the workers of Haft Tappeh Company, was transferred to prison on June 2020 to serve a 5-year imprisonment sentence. On the March 2023, after spending over four years in prison, she was released from Evin Prison. However, just a few hours after her release, while on route to the city of Dezfoul, she was re-arrested by security forces. She was subsequently sentenced to an additional 2 years in prison, banned from membership in political-social groups, prohibited from using a smartphone, and residing in Tehran and neighboring provinces for a definite period of 2 years.

Rafiqh Salimi, a worker and labor activist, was arrested by security forces in Sanandaj on the seventh day of Azar month, 1401 (November 2022), and has been in prison since then.

Mr. Salimi was summoned to the Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj under the presidency of Judge Naghizadeh on April 16, 1402. During this court session, Rafigh Salimi was charged with 'establishing illegal groups and actions against national security' and 'corruption on earth.' Due to these charges, he is at risk of facing the death penalty. Rafigh Salimi is ill and suffers from physical problems, requiring medical attention and daily access to treatment.

Zartosht Ahmadi Ragheb, born in 1344 (1965), is a dismissed firefighter, laborer, and civil activist who has been in prison since December 16, 1401 (March 2023). He has been sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Eiman Afshari. This imprisoned worker has been arrested and imprisoned multiple times before.

A considerable number of other workers, teachers, and labor activists have been arrested in recent months and years and are currently temporarily released on bail. These activists either have been sentenced to prison terms or have pending judicial cases, and there is a constant possibility of imprisonment sentences being executed against them. Below are the names of some of them.

Masoud Farhikhteh, Atekeh Rajabi, Erfan Kohzad, Amir Chamani, Javad Esmaeili, Delir Nasrollahi, Azad Khanchezar, Maryam Vahidian, Kamran Sakhtemangar, Amirabas Azarmvand, Asal Mohammadi, Hiran Pirbodaghi, Eskandar (Soran) Lotfi, Masoud Nikkhah, Mohammad Habibi, Mohammad Irannejad, Morteza Seyedi, Nasrollah Amirlou, Reyhaneh Ansarinejad, Nahid Khodaju, Tahereh Naghi'ee, Farhad Sheikhi, Borhan Saeedi, Eghbal Shabani, Kamal Karimi, Khabat Mahmoudi, Shadman Abdi, Shaban Mohammadi, Soleyman Abdi, Mokhtar Asadi, Maziar Seyyednejad, Fariba Zandkarimi, Kamal Fakourian, Vorya Karimi, Jabar Pakzad, Bahaedin Maleki, Shiva Mafakheri, Soheila Khaledi, Gholamreza Sharifeh, Armin Sharifeh, Hawzhin Latifi, Golnar Ghadimkhani, Mozafar Salehnia, Masoud Kordpour, Abdollah Rezaei, Masoud Ghobadi, Vorya Ghaderian, Zhila Khayer, Rahim Sarkar, Fahime Sadat Hashemi, Ribwar Abdollahi, Sedigh Reihani, Reza Aghdasi, Hajar Saeidi, Abdollah Kheyraadi, Valeh Zamani, Farid Kuravand, Zolfali Tarazi, Rouholah (Rada) Mardani, Ahmad Alizadeh, Peyman Farhangian, Eghbal Pishkari, Sirvan Mahmoudi, Habib Karimi, Rahman Soleimani, Osman Esmaeili, Parvin Abdollapanah, Saeed Mohammadi, Fateh Majidi, Bahram Gorgan, Jahanshah Asadinia.



Colleagues in global labor unions!

Despite being one of the first countries to join the International Labour Organization (ILO) and signing the first Convention in 1957, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to disregard and violate many of the conventions of this organization even after 66 years since that date. This includes the core ILO conventions 87, 98, and 138, with two of them (87 and 98) being relevant to the right to organize and collectively bargain. The Iranian government not only neglects to sign these conventions but also responds with severity and violence against any labor activists who make even the slightest effort in this direction.

As outlined in this report, a significant number of Iranian workers, teachers, and other activists find themselves imprisoned solely because they seek to achieve their basic human rights and exercise the right to form independent organizations and engage in free activities.

The IIWU kindly requests that, due to the responsibility you have, you consider these instances as a continuation of the blatant and severe violations of workers' human rights in Iran. We urge you to take serious action against the authorities of the Islamic Republic through international entities, including the International Labour Organization.

The membership of the Islamic Republic in the governing body of the International Labour Organization is unacceptable to the workers of Iran. In fact, the government should be internationally held accountable for its suppression of Iranian workers.

Furthermore, the International Labour Organization should not recognize the delegations of the Islamic Republic under the title of worker representatives. Instead, they should extend invitations to independent and genuine labor activists from Iran to truly represent the voice of Iranian workers in international forums.

We also expect you to exert pressure on the Iranian government through any means possible to immediately and unconditionally release imprisoned workers, teachers, social and political activists.

The Independent Iranian Workers Union

August 2023