

>>> "ICFTU Press" <press@icftu.org> 08/09/06 2:39 >>>
INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

ICFTU Media Release

For immediate use - Brussels, 9 August 2006
127/060306

Iran -Trade union prisoners' release welcomed, but repression continues

Just days following a formal complaint to the ILO from trade unions, Mansoor Osanloo, Iran's most prominent trade union prisoner, who has been detained incommunicado for over seven months, was today released from Tehran's infamous Evin Prison at midday GMT.

Warmly greeting Osanloo's release, ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder commented:

'This release comes not a day too early. The Iranian government has repeatedly victimised this man for standing up for basic human rights. We urge them to drop the charges against him and the other trade unionists involved in this incident immediately'.

'It is a testament to the power of international solidarity that he has been released. However, the conditions of his release are almost as unacceptable as his arrest and we will challenge them forcefully', he added.

The authorities have set a 150 million toman (\$US 165,000) bail on Osanloo's release. Osanloo's union colleagues, friends and relatives have had to commit their private property as collateral in order to secure his release from Evin prison, known for decades as one of the world's worst torture centers.

Osanloo, who is the President of the independent Union of Bus Drivers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company ("Sherkat-e Vahed Syndicate"), an affiliate of the International Transport Federation, had been arrested following a protest last December by his union's members against the non-payment of wages, poor working conditions and the company's refusal to recognise the union, established in May 2005.

'We are above all grateful to the countless affiliates of the ICFTU, to the International Federation of Transport Workers (ITF) and their affiliates around the world, as well as to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for their relentless efforts which brought this about', Ryder continued.

The ICFTU and ITF have repeatedly demanded his release and protested the prison authorities' refusal to grant him medical treatment for injuries sustained during a police attack on a union meeting in May last year.

Last month, the ICFTU and ITF had jointly lodged a formal complaint against Tehran with the UN's International Labour Organisation, after the Iranian government's Labour Ministry had for months claimed that Osanloo was to be released "any day". (The text of that complaint is available at:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991224879&Language=EN>

"We wish Osanloo a calm, safe and happy reunion with his family and friends as well as a prompt return to health following his terrible ordeal at the hands of the regime. Meanwhile, we will continue to fight for his union's recognition, as well as for the reinstatement of dozens of Sherkat-e Vahed bus drivers illegally fired for union activities last January and February", Ryder concluded.

Independent trade unions are forbidden by law in Iran. Attempts to establish them are severely repressed and the only organisation allowed to exist, the so-called "Workers' House", is government-controlled.

For more information on Osanloo's case and trade union rights in Iran, see the ICFTU's Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, 2006, at: <http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223908&Language=EN>

For more information, please contact the ICFTU Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 241 affiliated organizations in 156 countries and territories: <http://www.icftu.org> . Both the ICFTU and ITF (www.itf.org.uk) are members of Global Unions.

You are currently subscribed to icftu-online as: Rainer.Gries@fes.de
To unsubscribe send a blank email to leave-icftu-online-167589G@forum.icftu.org