

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Iran: ITUC and ITF Take Action at ILO Over Renewed Detention of Mansour Osanloo

Brussels, 5 December 2006 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) are lodging a formal complaint at the UN's International Labour Organisation over the renewed detention of trade unionist Mansour Osanloo by the Iranian authorities. Osanloo, President of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed), was arrested on 19 November by five government agents who fired gunshots into the air and threw him violently into a waiting car. He is being held in Evin Prison in a section reserved for prisoners charged with political offences. His wife was not allowed to see him until 26 November, and he was finally allowed to see his lawyers on 5 December. Also on 5 December, a judge stipulated an additional 30,000,000 Toman bail (bringing the total bail to some US\$200,000) for the release of Mr. Osanloo, on condition that only his wife, Farzaneh Osanloo, could act as guarantor. Mrs. Osanloo was unable to pay.

Mansour Osanloo is allegedly being investigated for failing to present himself for a court appearance, even though his arrest took place the day before the court hearing which was scheduled for November 20. The November 20 hearing related to charges for which he had already spent more than seven months in Evin prison dating from 22 December 2005. According to his testimony to Iran's Human Rights Commission, he was held in solitary confinement for almost four months during that time, repeatedly blindfolded and kept in handcuffs, and subjected to continued harassment and threats, including to his family. Interrogators threatened him with 15 years in prison if he did not "cooperate" with them, and told him that they had the power to "annihilate" his family. Osanloo had undergone eye surgery just one week prior to his re-arrest, as a result of a previous attack on him connected with his trade union activities.

On 8 November, Osanloo was detained by local police in the city of Tabriz for several hours along with nine other representatives from his union. This incident took place while the group was on its way to take part in a workshop organized by the ILO.

In a further development, trade unionists Seyed Davoud Razavi, Abdolreza Tarazi and Golamreza Golam Hosseini were arrested on 3 December 2006, in Tehran's Khavaran bus terminal whilst distributing trade union leaflets to fellow bus drivers. Razavi and Tarazi were released the same

evening. Hosseini, however, was kept in detention as his family had not been able to provide bail. The three are amongst the 50 Vahed bus drivers who have been suspended since their job actions last year.

In a letter to Iranian President Ahmadinejad, ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder has called for Osanloo's immediate and unconditional release, and contested the government's past assertions to the former ICFTU and the ITF that it is committed to workers' rights. The international union bodies consider that the previous detention of Osanloo, and his recent re-arrest, are directly linked to his trade union activities including his contacts with the UN, ILO, ITUC and ITF. In its request to the ILO to intervene directly with the Iranian authorities to secure his release, the ITUC has also raised the cases of trade unionists Mahmoud Salehi, Jalal Hosseini, Mohsen Hakimi and Borhan Divangar who have been sentenced to between two and four years in prison for trade union activities, including having had contacts with the ICFTU in recent years.

Founded on November 1 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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