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Iran: “I will not be intimidated”, union leader Osanloo tells ITUC General Council

Brussels, 21 June 2007 (ITUC OnLine): In an address to the ITUC General Council meeting in Brussels today, Iranian trade union leader Mansour Osanloo told of the persecution of him and other members of his union in the “Sherkate Vahed” company (Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company) by their employers and the Iranian authorities. Osanloo, who was accompanied by a delegation from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), described the harassment and intimidation which Sherkate Vahed members have been facing, with some members of the union having been arrested 10 or more times, and family members, including young children, being beaten, detained and subjected to inhumane treatment.

Just prior to arriving in Brussels, Osanloo had been notified that a five-year prison sentence had been passed on him, however he remained defiant in the face of this latest violation of fundamental rights by the Iranian authorities, telling the General Council that “I will not be intimidated by this”. Osanloo has already faced periods of detention, including in the notorious section 209 of Evin prison in Tehran. Following his arrest in November 2006, the ITUC and the ITF lodged a complaint with the International Labour Organisation, which also raised the cases of four other Sherkate Verhad members, who received prison sentences of between two and four years as a result of their trade union activities.

“Mansour Osanloo and his colleagues in the union are determined to continue their work in support of decent wages, employment conditions and fair treatment. The Iranian authorities should be ashamed of their continued denial of the right to independent and democratic trade unionism, and the ITF will continue to work with the ITUC to provide international solidarity to their cause”, said ITF General Secretary David Cockcroft.

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates.

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