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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Iran: Anti union repression continues

Brussels, 5 July 2007 (ITUC Online): Concern is growing for the welfare of Mr. Mahmoud Salehi, the leader and founding member of the Baker Workers' Association of Saquez, who has been in prison since 9 April 2007 and whose medical condition is now considered life-threatening. Mr. Salehi has a stone in his one remaining kidney and requires regular dialysis, treatment which is not available to him in prison.

Several groups and organizations are campaigning in Iran for the immediate release of Mahmoud Salehi. The Committee in Defense of the May Day Arrested Workers in Iran has called for renewed urgent action for the immediate transfer of Salehi to a specialized hospital for urgent treatment. According to the information received by the ITUC, the Sanandaj's authorities are preventing the transfer of Salehi to a hospital purposefully to dangerously weaken his health.

The ITUC has already written to the President of Iran on several occasions to strongly condemn attacks by the Iranian authorities on independent trade unions in the country (see previous online http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1060&var_recherche=salehi). and expressed its concerns about the serious consequences of the failure to provide appropriate medical treatment for Mr. Salehi, while he remains in custody. The ITUC received no reaction from the Iranian authorities. It is now urging all its affiliates to join in the appeal to the authorities to ensure that Mr. Salehi is released on humanitarian grounds and receives urgent medical attention.

"Creating life-threatening conditions for a person who is in custody merely for exercising his fundamental right to form a trade union and develop legitimate trade union activities, especially when one is aware of all judicial irregularities and abuses that led to Mahmoud Salehi's detention, is simply appalling" declared Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary.

The ITUC has also expressed its concerns in a letter sent today to the International Labour Organisation, (http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2007-07-04_Saqez_IV_-_add_info.pdf). "This is clearly an attempt on behalf of the Iranian intelligence services to force Mr. Salehi to stop his trade union activities." The ITUC has requested in its letter that the matter be brought to the attention of the Committee on Freedom of Association.

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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