

Workers *in* Iran

News & views from the labour movement in Iran



Special Issue - Monday, 4 June 2007

Islamic Republic must be expelled from the International Labour Organization!

This year International Labour Organization, ILO, will hold its annual convention from May 30th to June 15th; and every year ILO hosts representatives of Islamic Republic of Iran in its annual convention. Despite growing workers protests and unrests in Iran, it has been accepting and legitimizing puppets of regime made organs such as Workers' House and Islamic Councils as "Iranian workers organizations".

This is the very subject of our protestation. Last year representatives of the

International Labour Solidarity committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iran at the annual ILO convention pointed out this to the participants of the convention. Bahram Soroush the speaker of this group, and representing workers of Iran, the workers of Vahed Company and workers of Iran Khodro and representing all the Iranian workers that objected to the Islamic Republic's presence at this convention, in a historic move took the opportunity and addressed the participants of the con-

vention. In this convention, Representatives of Worker-communist Party of Iran demanded unconditional release of Mansoor Osanloo and the expulsion of Islamic Republic of Iran from the ILO. We demand that Islamic Republic of Iran must be expelled from ILO and other international authorities. This year too we are going to gather at the ILO annual convention to protest the presence of representatives of Islamic Republic and the presence of messengers of Islamic Councils and Workers' House. In our opinion, not only these suppressors of Iranian workers have to be banned from attending international authorities,

have no labour organisation or even a government-controlled organisation.

3- Iranian workers, especially like workers of Iran Khodro, are deprived of having any labour organisation. Any one attempting to set up an organisation is sacked immediately and the representatives of the organisation are arrested and jailed. An example of this is the case of the Vahed Bus company workers.

4- The Iranian government and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Labour department, which you have invited as representatives of us, the workers in Iran, to ILO's general assembly, are against the establishment of any form of workers'

Iran Khodro workers protest Islamic Regime's presence at the ILO Convention

From: "Iran Khodro" Workers

To: Secretary of International Labour Organization, Mr. Khovan So-amavia

Dear Secretary,

It is necessary to inform you that those who have been invited to the ILO general assembly as Iranian workers' representatives, are not who they are supposed to be, here are the following reasons:

1- Choosing these people as Iranian workers' representatives are against the 98 and 87 ILO conventions, which you are its general secretary of. According

to these conventions, workers have the right to elect their own representatives in a free election, and states have no right to interfere in the process of establishing free workers' organizations. These individuals are appointed by the government and represent the employers in Iran and have nothing to do with the workers of Iran.

2- In Iran having any form of independent and free labour organisation is illegal and is considered to be a crime. Iran Khodro, the company in which we work for, has over 100,000 personnel, 40,000 of whom work in the central company and work under one roof but

In protestation against the presence of Islamic Republic of Iran at the ILO

A look at a fraction of Islamic Republic's crimes against workers in Iran

While ILO's annual convention is being held and Islamic Regime and its agents of Islamic Councils and Workers' House are present there, it is worth to take a look at a fraction of its dismal treating and of suppression of workers rights and their struggles.

1- On May Day 2007, 13 workers activists, 1) Shaice Amani, president of the

board of directors of Nationwide Union of Unemployed and Dismissed Workers, 2) Sediq Karimi, member of board of directors of the same organization, 3) Khaled Sevari, vice president of the Union, 4) Eqbal Latifi, 5) Yadolla Moradi, 6) Najmehdin Rajabi, 7) Farooq Gavili, 8) Anvar Mefakheri, 9) Sediq Amjadi, 10) Habibolla Kelkani, 11) Mohiadin

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From page 1 (IRI must be expelled...)

but also they must be indicted for their brutality against workers of Iran.

We are calling on workers organizations worldwide to join us in this protest. Join us in our demand to expel the Islamic Republic and its Workers' House from ILO; and to condemn this regime for its suppression of workers basic rights. At this moment, this regime has jailed 3 worker's activists, Shice Amani, Sediq Karimi, and Mahmood Salehi for organizing May Day, and defending workers' rights. Mansoor Osanloo is also being sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for getting involved in workers' struggle. We expect that at this year's convention, one of the most urgent issues will be the unconditional release of these workers, and removal of bogus charges brought up against these activist by Islamic Republic of Iran.

We guarantee that the presence of suppressors of workers in international gatherings to be a major infamy. Once more, we call upon workers' organization worldwide to support Iranian workers, their struggle, demands; and to support our demand to expel Islamic Republic and its Workers' House for ILO.

**Workers-communist Party of
Iran – Committee Abroad**

May 30 2007

(a look at ...)

Rajabi, 12) Sediq Sobhani, and 13) Tayb Chetani were arrested for participating in May Day celebration. Eleven of these jailed workers were released on bail, but Shaice Amani and Sediq karimi are still detained. The released workers are being called to the court for trial.

2- Once more a new wave of attacks is begun on Afghan immigrant workers. Security forces are randomly and without prior notice showing up at the workshops and other workplaces to hunt down Afghan workers and treat them with utmost violence. They are even being thrown down from the scaffolds. An Afghan immigrant worker lost his life in one of these atrocious attacks.

3) On April 9 2007 Mahmood Salehi, one of city of Saqez's labour activists, was arrested and was taken and being held at Sanandej prison.

4) Mansoor Osanloo, president of Vahed Bus Union in March of this year's Revolutionary Court's session, on a bogus charge of "Security Threat" condemned

From page 1 (Iran khodro workers ...)

organizations. Iranian Labour departments do not consider human rights and even any of its own written law. They prevent any effort to organize elections for labour organizations in Iran.

5-The Iranian government with its security forces prevent workers from achieving their rights. They prevent strikes, workers gatherings; and participants in the strikes loses his/her job, arrested, and imprisoned. An example of this is the sacking of dozens of Iran Khodro and Iran Khodro Diesel workers during the past year. Also now the representatives of the dismissed and unemployed workers are in prison.

6- Since the workers of Iran do not have labour organisations and civil freedoms, they are deprived of their basic rights and wages; and right now 80% of Iranian workers are working on contracts or on daily wages when in permanent jobs. They have no right to express an opinion on their contract and on that basis give in to signing 'blank cheques'. And this clearly contravenes the conventions of the International Labour Organization.

Dear Sir,

In such a country that its workers are deprived of any type of their own organization, how and in what law do some individuals participate in the ILO assembly as "worker representatives"?

to 4 years in prison; and one extra year for the charge of "propaganda against the regime" was added to his jail time.

5) Teachers struggle to obtain their basic rights, which had gathered new momentum in the last 3 months, was faced with suppression and dozens of them were arrested. Authorities have not met their demands. Some of the detainees have been released on bail; but are to report to a court date. Furthermore, some of the teachers have lost their jobs for participating in these protests.

6) January 2006: around 1,000 bus workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company were arrested during their strike. Some were tortured. Many were sacked. Even the partners and children of some of the workers were not spared.

7) Over one million workers have been without pay from several months to 2 years due to so called "wage arrears" (non-payment of wages). For example, textile workers in the city of Kashan, who have been without pay for 14 months, several textile companies in

We, the "Iran Khodro" workers, consider your acceptance of these individuals as "Iranian Workers' Representatives" as neglecting the ILO Laws specially contravening conventions of 98 & 87.

We, "Iran Khodro" Workers do not consider these individuals as our rightful representatives and demand for their expulsion from the ILO meeting.

We are asking you to condemn the Iranian Government for obvious violations of the ILO written agreements, these violations include laying off workers for asking their basic rights and arresting and imprisonments of their representatives. We ask you to demand immediate freedom of all poisoned workers and cancellation of any police surveillance against them in Iran.

Dear Sir,

We hope that the ILO and you as its General Secretary approve such a resolution that it insists on the fundamental ILO written agreements specially 97 & 87 for its members. Doing that provides an open hand for workers to establish their own free labour organizations and elect real representatives to send to the next ILO assembly.

Numbers of Workers in Auto Factory "Iran Khodro"

29 May, 2007

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Copy to: All Human Rights Organizations

Ghazvin and hundreds of other factories around the country. The minimum wage - if paid at all and on time - is around 1/3 of the official poverty line.

8) The protest of workers at Khatoon Abad copper mine over jobs around three years ago was crushed. The security forces fired at the workers, killing four.

9) September 2005: 11 miners at Bab Nizoo mine perished because the management had tried to save money by turning off the ventilators. The authorities have not accepted any responsibility towards the families of the deceased.

Any protest against these atrocities is

Visit these websites:

www.wpiran.org
www.kargaran.org
www.m-hekmat.com
www.wipbriefing.com
www.socialismnow.org

(a look at ...)

answered with bullets, prison, torture and firing. The Iranian government's Islamic Labour Councils and "Workers' House", who attend the ILO conference as "workers' representatives", are ideological and state-sponsored organisations which work with the government in its attacks on workers. One example was the attack on the office of the bus workers' union on 9 May 2005, when leading members of the Islamic Councils and Workers' House tried to cut Mr. Ossanlou's tongue. Also during the crushing of the bus workers' strike this year, these organisations worked hand

in hand with the security forces in identifying strike activists.



Islamic Republic of Iran and its representatives should be allowed to attend

ILO's conventions. Instead of being invited to ILO conferences, they must stand trial for 28 years of crime against workers.

We request all workers' delegates and trade unions to press for the expulsion of the representatives of Iran's Islamic Councils and Workers' House from the ILO, in support of the fundamental rights of workers in Iran - the right to organise, the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining.

**International Labour Solidarity
Committee of the Worker-
communist Party of Iran**

30 May 2007

Bahram Soroush speech at the ILO Conference 12 June 2006

I am delighted, ladies and gentlemen, for the opportunity that I have to address this conference about the situation of workers in Iran.

Unfortunately Iranian workers are not represented at this conference. So I am honoured to be bringing their voice to this conference.

As you may know, various sections of Iranian workers have written to the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, to say that the so-called "workers' delegation" from Iran does not represent Iranian workers; that these people are members of the Iranian government's Islamic Labour Councils and Workers' House, which are state-sponsored bodies, charged with workers' surveillance and repression.

One of the delegates at this conference, namely Mr. Ali Akbar Eivazi, personally led a vicious attack last year on the office of Tehran's bus workers' union, inflicting serious injuries on Mr. Ossanlou, the president of that union, and many other unionists.

Mr Ossanlou is still in prison, after nearly six months, for trying to build a union.

In January, nearly 1,000 bus drivers and workers in Tehran were arrested and jailed for going on strike. In Iran you are arrested for trying to form labour organisations and for going on strike.

Just a couple of months ago, over 50 workers of Iran Khodro car-manufacturing company were fired for going on strike.

Over a million workers have been with-

out pay, from several months to 2 or 3 years, due to non-payment of their wages. The textile workers of Kashan, Ghazvin and hundreds of other factories around the country have not been paid for months.

The minimum wage in Iran is around 1/3 of the official poverty line.

A few years ago, the security forces fired on the workers at Khatoun Abad copper mine, killing four.

The list is endless...

The Islamic Republic regime of Iran and its Islamic Labour Councils and Workers' House should be expelled from the ILO for their brutal repression of workers; for denying them internationally recognised rights to organise and strike and to collective bargaining;

for denying them the basic right to a decent pay; for denying them a human existence...

Ladies and gentlemen! Honourable trade union representatives and workers' delegates!

Please use your rights and powers as members of the ILO to urge the immediate expulsion of the Iranian regime and its Islamic Councils and Workers' House from the ILO.

No ILO legitimacy should be given to these persecutors of workers. Genuine representatives of Iranian workers should be allowed to take part at ILO conferences.

Iran and its Islamic Councils out of ILO!



Iranian Workers are not Represented at ILO's Conventions!

From: Nationwide Union of Dismissed and Unemployed workers of Iran

To: International Confederation of Labour Unions

With Warmest Greeting to All Friends and Our Coworkers,

The ILO annual session is going to be held in the following situation in Iran this year:

1- In respect to the official report given out during the first half of the year before only two thousands were laid off. Other official report explains how remaining working people have to take the burden of extra work as a result of that. (You should know that just a very small portion of what is going on is given out by official report in Iran)

2- Not paying workers' wages on time has got much wider attention. Approximately 95 % of all workers' protests have been focusing on not getting paid on time. The official reports tell us of approximately 50 workers protests each month. The official reports tell us also that there are approximately 30 cases each month that employer did not pay their workers on time in factories. In these cases workers did not protest just because they were afraid of being laid off and unemployed. The official reports give an example in "Oslavie" in which 50% of workers got their wages but with a 5 to 6 month delay.

3- Workers' minimum wage was \$16.84 US per month in 2006. Official report says that there have been more than 30 thousand contractor companies with more than 1 million workers. The report states that three quarter of them gave their workers even less than this amount each month. (We have to remind you that Poverty Line in Iran officially has been set to \$40 US each month by the Iranian Central Bank a few years earlier.) For example a worker's wage for Napkin factories in province of Qom has been \$8.63 US per month. These wages are in such a situation that rent for a ordinary accommodation of a family of 4 in working class area in Tehran (Capital) is \$23.74 US each month; whereas other large industrial cities is 70% of that.

4- Due to wages being so far under poverty line and in scale of hundreds of thousands layoffs and unemployment, in the past year child labour especially in workshops, beggars and peddlers in streets rates are rising at a rapid pace. More tragic situation are for children of Afghan Immigrants who live in such inhumane condition and do not have right to any education.

5- Woman workers in Iran are deprived from equal wages in respect to men. An example

as reported officially, textile factories in Zabol last year laid off their male workers and hired women with \$5.40 US. Women in large cities often work in private companies as sale women and majority of them gets half of the wage as men get.

6- Generally there are no collective agreements in Iran. Last year, not only with such slavery condition as one month contract and blank checks type of agreement (you sign a blank form and whatever employer wants they can write in it afterwards), but also they had to sign blank form and giving several hundreds US\$ draft to name of employer to be hired. Several such cases have officially been reported in industrial city of Saveh.

On other hand:

1- Last year, workers of "Parris" factory in Sanandaj and "Alborz Carpet" in Babolsar were brutally oppressed in such a way that some of them were injured and dozens of workers were arrested. Custom workers in port of Daylam were severely oppressed in such a way that one of the workers was shot in the head by security police.

2- Nation wide tens of thousands of teachers gathered and their strikes were brutally oppressed and hundreds of them were arrested and put in prison.

3- A month ago, security forces and police in Sanandaj attacked the May Day celebration injuring many of the workers, 13 were arrested. 11 of these arrested were freed after 10 days on \$540 US bail, the two remainders, Shaice Amani chief executive director and Sadiq Karimi member of executive director of "Nationwide Union of Dismissed and Unemployed" are currently in prison. Shaice Amani was injured on his left knee during the security force's attack. Sadiq Karimi has lost hearing in one ear during this attack and one of his teeth has been broken. All requests for these two to have medical care access has been denied.

4- Prior to May Day, Mahmood Salehi one of workers leader in Iran without any written warrant and any lawful process was arrested and was transferred to the Central Sanandaj prison. Mahmood Salehi has only one kidney which 50% of it is working, for that reasons he is in very critical physical condition, and in need of immediate medical care, has been denied any and all medical care. His health and life are in great danger.

5- In the last two years members of Tehran Bus Transit Syndicate were under the extreme pressure with prison, lay offs, beating and life threats of their lives. Few days ago Mansoor Osanloo, the chief executive director of the syndicate was convicted to 5 years

in prison. The Tehran Bus Transit Syndicate is a member of International Confederation of Transport Workers.

The conditions described above are only a brief description of what work and living conditions of workers are like in Iran. Despite of Iranian government signature under written agreements of 98 & 87, any effort to establish workers' organization are forbidden in Iran. Any workers' gathering is oppressed savagely, in such situations with absolutely no right for workers in Iran. While workers representatives are being tortured daily in prison by Islamic Councils and Workers House which are spies and the means of creation of all misery. This leads to complete lack of any right for workers during the past 28 years are invited as workers representative of Iranian workers to ILO annually meeting.

The acceptance of Workers House and Islamist Councils to attend annual meeting of ILO as the Iranian workers' representation in our view is in direction of utmost anti workers policy in Iran, and our Union condemns that.

To our friends and dear coworkers,

The Nationwide Union of Dismissed and Unemployed Workers of Iran in its general assembly with temporary workers, suspended and laid off workers from different factories has been established. We expect you and other worldwide labour representatives who participate in the ILO meeting this year to protest the slavery conditions of the workers in Iran. We ask you all to protest compromising policy of ILO that provide present of House Worker and Islamist Councils in ILO meeting. We ask you to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Mahmood Salehi, Shaice Amani and Sadiq Karimi from prison. We ask you to request ILO unless independent labour organizations are not allowed to be established freely in Iran by workers themselves; it should not accept any individuals as "workers' representatives".

We hold your hands warmly and wish for the success in your ILO meeting this year!
Long Live International Labour Solidarity!

Nationwide Union of Laid off and Unemployed Workers in Iran

1 June, 2007

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Copy to: All representatives of labour organizations in annual meeting of ILO