

Ba kargran dar iran yari bersaned /Amir

## Appeal for Support to Tehran Transport Workers Fired for Organizing- Iran

The general assembly of the workers of Tehran and Suburbs Public Bus Transportation Company (Vahed Bus Company) was held on June 3rd, 2005 after a long period of struggle. Workers voted for the first time after more than two decades to elect the board of directors of the bus workers' union (the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, Vahed).

The Company has been reacting to workers' organizing efforts in extremely harsh manner. According to the latest information from the Syndicate, thus far 17 labour activists have been fired. Several workers have been displaced and many have been harassed and have undergone interrogations at the hands of the Company's security forces. The Syndicate is under extreme pressures from the Employer and the government-sponsored Workers House and the Islamic Labour Council to back down its demand for recognition as the true representative of workers in the Company \*(See below for a sample letter and more background information). The sacked workers are also facing great financial difficulties and this would eventually affect the Syndicate in the pursuit of its objectives. As a result, the union has launched a broad and public fundraising campaign. The Syndicate is urging all concerned individuals and labour and progressive organizations around the world to pressure the Iranian government and Tehran and Suburbs Public Transportation Company, demanding the immediate reinstatement of all fired labour activists. The Syndicate has also called for financial donations in order to support the sacked workers and their families, many of whom are tenants without any other source of income. In particular, the Company, which is one of the largest employers in Iran with over 17,000 employees, must be pressured to:

1. Immediately reinstate all fired workers.
2. End the intimidation and harassment of workers and labour activists in the company.
3. Recognize the newly elected independent union, and remove the company-selected, government-sponsored Islamic Labour Council.
4. Negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the workers' union and recognize the right to strike.

**PLEASE DONATE TO THE FIRED WORKERS FUND:** The Syndicate is also asking the international labour and progressive movements and concerned individuals for financial support to the unjustly fired workers and their families. Donations can be sent to: International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran; P.O. Box 1164, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2P4, Canada. Please indicate that the money is intended for the 'Tehran Transportation Workers' Fund'.

Workers at the Tehran Bus Company are determined to defend their union vigorously. Given the Iranian government's refusal to recognize free and independent labour organizations and considering the existing massive poverty among the working people in Iran, these fellow workers will not be able to financially afford many of the expenses they are accruing. We are therefore asking the international labour movement and workers' organizations in other parts of the world to provide as much financial donation as they possibly can to support this union. Any donations, small or large, will definitely help. The IASWI will ensure that the Syndicate will receive all financial contributions promptly and accurately.

Sample Protest Letter: Please send copies of your correspondence to the IASWI:  
info@workers-iran.org.

To: Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami  
President, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection  
Tehran, Iran  
Fax: 98-21-674-790  
Fax: 98-21-648.06.65  
Email: khatami@president.ir

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the situation of the workers at the Tehran and Suburbs Public Bus Transportation Company (Vahed Bus Company). According to the latest information, seventeen workers have been unjustly fired for supporting the formation of an independent union in the Company. The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company was formed and recognized by employees of the company through a genuine election on June 3rd, 2005. In spite of this, management refuses to reinstate the fired workers or recognize the Syndicate.

I ask you to take any necessary measures for the unconditional reinstatement of the fired workers. I hope that the right to organize freely will be recognized and that the fired workers will soon be back on the job.

Sincerely,  
NAME  
Mailing or Email address

cc: ILO, cabinet@ilo.org; ICFTU, turights@icftu.org; ITF, mail@itf.org.uk

\*Background Information:

The list of employees of Tehran Bus Company (Members of the Workers' Syndicate) who have been expelled because of their union activities, include the following:

- Abdolreza Tarazi ? area 3 ? Member, Syndicate's board of directors
- Abdullah Romanan- Alternate member, board of directors
- Ahad Farshi- Member, Syndicate's Legal Commission
- Ali Zadeh Hosseini ?worker area 7- Member, board of directors
- Aliakbar Pir Hadi- Member, board of directors
- Amir Takhiri- Member, Syndicate's Organizing Commission
- Atta Babakhani- Syndicate's Inspector
- Ayat Jadidi ? worker Area 3- Alternate member, board of directors of the Syndicate.
- Ebrahim Madadi ? Technical worker area2 ? Vice-President of the board of directors
- Hassan Karimi- Alternate Member, board of directors
- Hassan Mohammadi- Member of Syndicate
- Mahmoud Hojabri- Member of the board of directors

- Mansour Ossanlou ? employee area 7- President of the board of directors.
- Naser Gholami- Secretary of the Syndicate
- Reza Nematipour- Member of Syndicate?s Publicities Commission
- Seyed Behrooz Hosseini- Member of the board of directors

On May 9, 2005, the meeting of the Funding Board of Labour Syndicate for Tehran Public Bus Transportation Company was attacked by the representative of the ?Islamic labour councils,? ?Workers House? and the management of the Bus Company as well as the police. In this violent incident, which was led by Hassan Sadeghi the leader of the High Centre of the Islamic Labour Councils and his colleagues of the Workers House, some labour activists were injured and their properties got damaged.

A second attempt at convening a general assembly on May 13th met with the same fate and the security forces accompanied by some members of the Worker House once again attacked the meeting. On June 1st, the office of the union, which is inside the building of the bakery workers of Tehran, was targeted by Molotov cocktail attack or similar firebombs and was badly damaged.

On June 3, 2005, workers participated in a general assembly, held in the old building of the bakers? union. Ever since the morning of that day, security forces prevented the workers from entering the building. Later on, the presence of around 500 workers, carrying placards in defense of the general assembly, led to the retreat of the security forces and a reversal in their decision. Thus, the general assembly was able to convene with the participation of about eight thousand workers. 19 workers were elected as members of the board of directors, 9 as alternate members of the board and 3 as inspectors of the union. The union?s constitution was also adopted by the general assembly.

For more information and updates, please contact the IASWI:

[info@workers-iran.org](mailto:info@workers-iran.org)

[alliance@workers-iran.org](mailto:alliance@workers-iran.org)

IASWI- P.O. Box 1164 Station Q Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2P4 Canada

July 20, 2005