

بیانیه در همبستگی با کارگران در ایران

Statement in solidarity with workers in Iran

The information in the accompanying document has come to our attention, and we would like to protest the flogging sentences against Agh Dareh Gold Mine workers in Iran and to express our serious concerns about health and wellbeing of Mr. Jafar Azimzadeh, an anti-capitalist labour activist and chairperson of the Board of the Free Union of Iranian Workers, who has been on hunger strike since April 29, 2016.

Jafar Azimzadeh has been serving a 6 year prison sentence in Evin Prison since November 2015 merely for his labour activities. He was charged with "assembling and colluding with intent to act against national security"; this seems to be one of the key charges that the Iranian government has routinely been using against labour activists. Jafar is on indefinite hunger to protest against the fabricated charges of "gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security" and other security-related charges against himself and other labour activists and to denounce the ever-increasing anti-worker policies of the Iranian government.

As stated above, we are extremely outraged over the brutal flogging sentences against 17 Agh Dareh Gold Mine workers in Iran which were carried out publically in May 2016. These workers were protesting their right to job security and protection against layoffs. What's more, we have been informed that nine Bafgh Mining Company workers in Yazd Province have also been sentenced to imprisonment and tens of lashes in recent days. Their sentences for the time being has been suspended but will be carried out if they breach court orders. Bafgh mine workers (Iran Central Iron Ore Company Bafgh) were prosecuted following their strike actions that started in 2014. Such inhuman sentences against protesting workers are the gross violation of every internationally recognized convention and achievements on the rights of workers and human rights in general. Flogging is an extremely cruel act and a form

اطلاعات موجود در اسناد ضمیمه که بدستمان رسیده، ما را بر آن میدارد که به حکم شلاق بر علیه کارگران معدن طلای آق دره در ایران اعتراض کنیم، و همچنین ابراز داریم که شدیداً نگران سلامت و تندرستی آقای جعفر عظیم زاده، فعال کارگری ضد سرمایه داری و رئیس هیئت مدیره اتحادیه آزاد کارگران ایران، که از تاریخ ۱۰ اردیبهشت ۱۳۹۵ در اعتصاب غذا بسر میبرد، می باشیم.

جعفر عظیم زاده از نوامبر ۲۰۱۵ برای گذراندن حکم شش سال حبس تعزیری به اتهام "اجتماع و تبانی به قصد اقدام علیه امنیت ملی" که به دلیل فعالیت‌های کارگری ایشان بوده است، در زندان اوین محبوس است؛ این به نظر می رسد یکی از اتهامات اصلی ای است که دولت ایران بطور روتین علیه فعالین کارگری بکار می برد. جعفر در اعتراض به اتهام ساختگی "اجتماع و تبانی به قصد اقدام علیه امنیت ملی" و دیگر اتهامات امنیتی علیه او و دیگر فعالین کارگری و در محکومیت سیاست‌های ضد کارگری روزافزون دولت ایران در یک اعتصاب غذای نامحدود به سر می برد.

همانطور که در بالا ذکر شد، ما شدیداً از احکام وحشیانه شلاق علیه ۱۷ کارگر معدن طلای آق دره که در ایران به طور علنی در ماه می ۲۰۱۶ انجام شد، خشمگین هستیم. این کارگران برای امنیت شغلی و بر علیه بیکارسازیها دست به اعتراض زده بودند. همچنین مطلع شده ایم که ۹ نفر از کارگران معدن سنگ آهن بافق واقع در استان یزد نیز به ضربات شلاق و حبس‌های تعلیقی محکوم شده اند. کارگران معدن بافق (شرکت سنگ آهن مرکزی ایران-بافق) به دلیل اعتصابات و اعتراضاتی که از سال ۲۰۱۴ آغاز شد دادگاهی شده بودند. چنین احکام ضدانسانی ای علیه کارگران معترض نقض فاحش کلیه مقوله نامه ها و دستاوردهای شناخته شده بین المللی در رابطه با حقوق کارگری و حقوق انسانی بطور علی العموم می باشد. شلاق یک عمل به شدت بی رحمانه و نوعی شکنجه است و باید بلافاصله متوقف و ممنوع شود.

of torture and must be stopped and banned immediately.

We are deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of Jafar Azimzadeh and other jailed workers in Iran and call for their immediate and unconditional freedom. The Iranian government is responsible for the life of Jafar Azimzadeh and other political prisoners. At the same time, we are sincerely urging Jafar Azimzadeh to end his hunger strike; the struggle for workers' right is strengthened when the labour movement's activists are alive and well.

Names (In alphabetical order):

- Greg Albo, Department of Political Science, York University & Co-editor of the Socialist Register.
- Kevin B. Anderson, Professor of Sociology at University of California, Santa Barbara
- Cyrus Bina, Distinguished Research Professor of Economics; University of Minnesota, USA & Fellow, Economist for Peace and Security
- Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor & Professor of Linguistics (Emeritus), The Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- John Clarke, Organizer, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty- Canada
- Steve Early, Labour activist & journalist, lawyer and organizer, USA
- Bill Fletcher Jr., Talk show host, writer & activist (USA)
- Safia Gahayr, Chair - International Solidarity Committee, CUPE Ontario
- Sam Gindin, Retired Assistant to the President of Canadian Auto Workers (now UNIFOR) and the former Packer Chair in Social Justice at York University
- Brad Hornick, PHD Candidate, Simon Fraser University, active with System Change Not Climate Change
- Boris Kagarlitsky, Sociologist & Marxist theoretician, Director of the Institute of Globalisation and Social Movements
- Michael A. Lebowitz, Professor Emeritus, Economics Department, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- David McNally, long-time left scholar-activist; Professor, Department of Political Science, York University
- Derrick O'Keefe, Author and Journalist, Editor at Ricochet Media
- Piergiorgio (Pier) Moro, Secretary, Australia Asia Worker Links
- Mike Palecek, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- Leo Panitch, Distinguished Research Professor of Political Science at York University & Co-editor of The Socialist Register
- Misagh Parsa, Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College, USA
- Herman Rosenfeld, writer, educator, and activist; member of Socialist Project
- Ingo Schmidt, Academic Coordinator of the Labour Studies Program at Athabasca University, Canada
- Peter Tatchell, Director, Peter Tatchell Foundation
- Michael Yates, Associate Editor of Monthly Review

ما عمیقاً نگران سلامتی و تندرستی جعفر عظیم زاده و دیگر کارگران زندانی در ایران هستیم، و خواهان آزادی فوری و بدون قید و شرط آنها می باشیم. حکومت ایران مسئول مستقیم جان جعفر عظیم زاده و دیگر زندانیان سیاسی می باشد. در عین حال، ما صمیمانه از جعفر عظیم زاده درخواست می کنیم که به اعتصاب غذایش پایان دهد؛ مبارزه برای حقوق کارگران زمانی قدرتمندتر است که فعالین جنبش کارگری زنده و سالم باشند.

Background information: Flogging sentences and security charges against workers, teachers and labour activists in Iran

In a joint statement, Esmail Abdi, General Secretary of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association (Tehran), and Jafar Azimzadeh, Chair Person of the Free Union of Iranian Workers, proclaimed: "it is plainly evident to all noble and fair minded individuals that millions of workers, teachers and other hard working people in Iran live under excruciating difficult and unbearable circumstances while their most basic human rights have been systematically violated for years. These unjust circumstances and unbearable conditions are created through imposition of poverty wages, non-payment of wages and total destruction of any job security for workers through expansion of temporary work contracts. Teachers are also facing exactly the same predicaments through introduction of temporary work titles such as "free teachers," "contract teachers," "Pre-K teachers," ... and more importantly by receiving 300,000 toman (less than 100 USD) per month with no insurance or other benefits. All the while temporary work contracts are being institutionalized in the public and private sector. Lack of full implementation of Pay Parity Law and the growing number of non-profit (private) schools are ultimately destroying free public education. Looting social security fund and other pension funds; prohibition of formation of independent workers' and teachers' organizations and criminalization of their protests; elimination of subsidies on basic items such as bread, water, electricity, gas, dairy products....These are only examples of abuses and excruciating conditions that have been imposed on workers and teachers. Imposition of such circumstances on workers, teachers and other wage earners, as the large majority of people in Iran, has made all aspects of life so difficult for them that by now for many workers working 12 hours a day, and in some cases 18 hours a day, has become the norm. Many teachers have resorted to having second and third jobs. And yet the majority of workers and teachers are still unable to support their families and enjoy the most basic living conditions and thus they have been pushed from the poverty line to bare survival. However, in response to this miserable situation, different administrations have resorted to repression and suppression of workers' and teachers' protests; they have imposed more rightlessness on workers in order to further loot and take away even more from people. As a result of the continuation of such policies, since Rouhani's administration coming to power strikes and protests have been officially banned in numerous work places and industries, all protest actions by workers and teachers, even the most peaceful ones in the workplaces are subject to suppression. Hundreds of workers and teachers have been summoned by courts, arrested and subject to prosecution. All leading labour activists have been fined with serious criminal charges and some of them like us are subject to long prison sentences. Most figures of the few independent organizations of workers and teachers, including us, are faced with heavy security charges and some of them are serving long prison terms in jails across the country. We are accused of "assembling and colluding with intent to act against national security" and thus jailed with long sentences in Evin prison. But we like thousands of other workers and protesting teachers have done nothing but defending the human dignity of ourselves and our fellow workers..... Our endeavors to achieve our basic, legitimate and humane demands are so clear that all allegations cited in criminalizing our cases point out to them: such as collecting signatures condemning below poverty line wages, creating independent workers' and teachers' formations and involvement in such organizations, participating in trade union gatherings in front of the parliament and the Ministry of Labour and handing letters of protest to the respective government authorities and other such civic activities. Based on the verdicts passed against us it could be concluded that any effort and step towards implementation of the existing limited protection laws and struggle to improve living

conditions and livelihoods of workers and teachers in this country are considered an act against national security.”

After issuing this statement, Abdi and Azimzadeh announced their intention to go on hunger strike as of April 29, 2016 to protest against criminalization of trade union and civic activities, assemblies and strikes; poverty wages, banning of independent May 1st celebrations and Teachers' Day as well as denouncing ILO's lack of effective and transparent action against the violation of the most basic rights of workers and teachers in Iran. They asserted that “The charge of ‘gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security’ and other security-related charges must be removed from the existing cases against protesting workers and teachers. “Such fabricated allegations against us and other imprisoned labour activists and jailed teachers must also be annulled.”

Following the strike by Esmail Abdi and Jafar Azimzadeh on April 29th, Esmail Abdi was transferred to hospital and released on three hundred million toman bail on Saturday, May 14, 2016. Esmail Abdi, who was going to attend the Seventh Congress of the Education International, was called to Evin prison on June 27, 2015 and has since been imprisoned; he had faced numerous interrogations during this period. The court was established in March 2016 and charged him with acting against national security and sentenced him to six years in prison. Abdi started a hunger strike since April 29, 2016 to protest against security changes against him and other trade union and labour activists. He is temporary released on bail and is expected to appear before a court of appeal.

Jafar Azimzadeh also started his hunger strike as of April 29, 2016. As of this report, he has continued with his hunger strike despite serious kidney problems and other serious health effects.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also carried out brutal flogging sentences against 17 Agh Dareh Gold Mine workers in in May 2016. Each worker received 30 to 100 lashes in public. These workers did nothing but protesting against layoffs and for job security. What’ more, nine Bafgh Mining Company workers in Yazd Province have also been sentenced to imprisonment and tens of lashes in recent days. Their sentences for the time being has been suspended but will be carried out if they breach court orders. Bafgh mine workers (employed by Iran Central Iron Ore Company Bafgh) were also prosecuted following their strike actions that began in 2014. Such inhuman sentences against protesting workers are the gross violation of every internationally recognized achievements and convention on the rights of workers and human rights in general.

We call on all workers’ and teachers’ organizations, progressive individuals, groups, organizations and Human Rights institutions to forcefully and strongly condemn the suppression and incarceration of labour activists and teachers by the Islamic Republic of Iran and call for the immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned labour activists and political prisoners in Iran. Security charges against workers, teachers and labour activists in Iran must stop! Flogging sentences smut stop immediately.

Statement by Jafar Azimzadeh and Esmail Abdi on their Hunger Strike starting April 29, 2016

Today it is plainly evident to all noble and fair minded individuals that millions of workers, teachers and other hard working people in Iran live under excruciating difficult and unbearable circumstances while their most basic human rights have been systematically violated for years.

These unjust circumstances and unbearable conditions are created through imposition of poverty wages, non-payment of wages and total destruction of any job security for workers through expansion of temporary work contracts. Teachers are also facing exact same predicaments through introduction of temporary work titles such as "free teachers," "contract teachers," "Pre-K teachers,"... and more importantly by receiving 300,000 toman per month with no insurance or other benefits. All the while temporary work contracts are being institutionalized in the public and private sector. Child labour is on the rise. Lack of full implementation of Pay Parity Law and adopted policies by the Cabinet on active and retired teachers, the growing number of non-profit schools and the board of trustees and ultimately destroying free public education. Looting social security fund and other pension funds; prohibition of formation of independent workers' and teachers' organizations and criminalization of their protests; elimination of subsidies on basic items such as bread, water, electricity, gas, dairy products....These are only examples of abuses and excruciating conditions that have been imposed on workers and teachers. Imposition of such circumstances on workers, teachers and other wage earners, as the large majority of people in Iran, has made all aspects of life so difficult for them that by now for many workers working 12 hours a day, and in some cases 18 hours a day, has become the norm. Many teachers have resorted to having second and third jobs. And yet the majority of workers and teachers are still unable to support their families and enjoy the most basic living conditions and thus they have been pushed from the poverty line to bare survival.

However, in response to this miserable situation, different administrations have resorted to repression and suppression of workers' and teachers' protests; they have imposed more rightlessness on workers in order to farther loot and take away even more from people.

As a result of the continuation of such policies, since Rouhani's administration coming to power strikes and protests have been officially banned in numerous work places and industries, all protest actions by workers and teachers, even the most peaceful ones in the workplaces are subject to suppression.

Hundreds of workers and teachers have been summoned by courts, arrested and subject to prosecution. All leading labour activists have been fined with serious criminal charges and some of them like us are subject to long prison sentences.

Most figures of the few independent organizations of workers and teachers, including us, are faced with heavy security charges and some of them are serving long prison terms in jails across the country. We are accused of "assembling and colluding with intent to act against national security" and thus jailed with long sentences in Evin prison. But we like thousands of other workers and protesting teachers have done nothing but defending the human dignity of ourselves and our fellow workers. All our activities and that of our other fellow colleagues in "Teachers' Trade Association," "Free Union of Iranian Workers," and other independent workers' and teachers organizations are known to the public and are very transparent.

Our endeavors to achieve our basic, legitimate and humane demands are so clear that all allegations cited in criminalizing our cases point out to them: such as collecting signatures condemning below poverty line wages, creating independent workers' and teachers' formations and involvement in such organizations, participating in trade union gatherings in front of the parliament and the Ministry of Labour and handing letters of protest to the respective government authorities and other such civic activities.

Based on the verdicts passed against us it could be concluded that any effort and step towards implementation of the existing limited protection laws and struggle to improve living conditions and livelihoods of workers and teachers in this country is considered an act against national security. We are fully aware and acknowledge the fact that our activities are indeed a danger to those that have lawlessly imposed mass poverty on workers and teachers. By insisting on our just demands we have challenged their plundering interests and domination, but they have prioritized their own narrow interest and security instead of our national security and in pursuit of this goal are jailing us and other labour activists and teachers in order to create obedience and docility in face of the current miserable condition.

Therefore in celebrating May First, the International Workers' Day, and expressing our solidarity with workers of the world, and in protesting criminalization of our trade union and civic activities, assemblies and strikes; poverty wages; banning of independent May 1st celebrations and Teachers' Day (in Iran, May 2nd is the official Teachers' Day-Translator's comment); protesting ILO's lack of effective and transparent action against the violation of the most basic rights of workers and teachers in Iran, The charge of "gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security" and other security-related charges should be removed from the existing cases against protesting workers and teachers. Such fabricated allegations against us and other imprisoned labour activists and jailed teachers must also be annulled; we therefore will begin indefinite hunger strike as of April 29, 2016 (Ordibehesht 10, 1395).

Jafar Azimzadeh- Evin Prison, Section 8

Esmail Abdi- Evin Prison, Section 8

Cc: International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Education International (EI)

Translation by IASWI

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Protest statement to be also sent to::

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