

Iranian workers need immediate international support

The international economic sanctions against Iran have forced industries to close and led to higher unemployment. Today, many workers are forced to live far below the poverty line, which has led to protests and strikes. In recent months, the largest and most extensive strikes in the country's history have been carried out at Haft Tappe, Hepco and in the oil and gas industry. The common and main requirements concern delayed salary payments and unpaid benefits, cancellation of temporary employment contracts, poor working conditions and inadequate working environment.

The ongoing Corona pandemic has affected the Iranian society in general and working people. Many workers have been affected when their workplaces were closed to counter the pandemic and they lost their income. For the imprisoned trade union activists, the Corona pandemic has meant that an already difficult situation has become even worse. Trade union leader Jafar Azimzadeh and Esmail Abdi, Secretary General of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association, have been infected by covid-19 in Evin Prison. Under international law, sick prisoners are required to receive medical care, but the Iranian regime refuses to transfer them to hospitals. There are also ongoing protests against the regime's lack of action to limit the spread of the pandemic in prisons.

The Iranian regime's response to the protests is violent police interventions, interrogations during torture and summary trials without the possibility of choosing own defence lawyers. The situation is worrying and therefore requires immediate action to support and protect the striking workers and imprisoned trade union activists in Iran.

The Swedish Trade Union Platform for Iran strongly condemns the harassments, arrests, torture and medieval punishing methods, apparently still commonly used by the regime despite earlier international protests.

We demand:

1. Immediate and unconditional release of all trade union and political prisoners in Iran.
2. Ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23, and ILO Conventions 87 and 98.
3. That the free and independent trade unions in Iran are recognised and allowed to operate in a climate free from violence, threats of imprisonment and exclusion from work.
4. That the government should introduce emergency legislation that gives every worker the right to statutory pay from the first day of absence and provide funds to ensure that employers can afford to pay the workers who lost their income because of the outbreak of Corona virus.

Saied Tagavi

The Swedish Trade Union Platform for Iran

A collaboration between The Swedish Trade Union Confederation LO, If Metall, The Swedish Transport Workers' Union and the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union