

Iran says Osanloo to be freed - good but not good enough, say ITF and ITUC

Saturday 3 July 2010, by [ITF](#) (Date first published: 1 July 2010).

The ITF and ITUC today welcomed an Iranian government promise that Mansour Osanloo is to be freed - but stated that there are still 52 other innocent trade unionists who should also be released.

The two organisations were speaking out after discovering that Iran has told the International Labour Organization (ILO) that Osanloo is due for release. The assurance is contained in the ILO's report* on the complaints made against the country by the ITF and ITUC, and states that "the (ILO) Committee welcomes the efforts by the (Iranian) Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to obtain the granting of a pardon for Mr. Osanloo. Noting further that the Head of the Judiciary has accepted the Minister's request for such a pardon, the Committee expects that these developments will lead to Mr. Osanloo's imminent release from prison."

The ITF and ITUC were quick to welcome the news of the promised "imminent release", but reminded the Iranian president that their complaints against Iran's abuses of trade unionists will not be silenced by the long overdue release of one man, however much it is to be looked forward to. The general secretaries of the two organisations, David Cockcroft and Sharan Burrow wrote to the Iranian president, stating:

"We are writing to you in response to the latest report from the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization. Report No. 357 of the Committee on Freedom of Association refers to the complaint that the ITUC and the ITF submitted to the ILO (Case 2508) and goes on to state that: "the Committee welcomes the efforts by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to obtain the granting of a pardon for Mr. Osanloo. Noting further that the Head of the Judiciary has accepted the Minister's request for such a pardon, the Committee expects that these developments will lead to Mr. Osanloo's imminent release from prison."

We welcome both the news of this commitment and the commitment itself. In the light of this promise, made by your officials to the ILO, we therefore request your immediate and unconditional intervention on this matter. The promised release of Mansour Osanloo will be an important first step by your government towards rebuilding the confidence of the international trade union community. We must, however, also strongly remind you of the need to address the other cases of those unjustly punished for undertaking legal trade union activities.

We wish to see further steps taken to guarantee the safe release of these other imprisoned trade unionists, believed to number at least 52 people, including representatives of the unions at the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed), the Haft Tapeh Sugar Plantation, and the Teachers' Trade Union, as well as journalists and lawyers. A list of these 52 people appears below**. We should like to highlight the cases of Saeed Torabian and Reza Shahbi of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed) whose whereabouts have remained unknown for a month now, following their detention by security forces.

In particular, the ITF once again condemns the continued imprisonment of Ebrahim Madadi - about whom, the ILO report notes, your government has failed to give any information. The ITF would also

like to make clear that while it welcomes Mansour Osanloo's release, it rejects the description of this as a 'pardon', since he has done nothing illegal.

The ITF also wishes to express its horror at reports that Mansour Osanloo's daughter in law has miscarried following beatings by members of your security forces. If correct then this is an appalling occurrence that demands the investigation and prosecution of those responsible.

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) is inviting Mansour Osanloo to take part in its 42nd global congress in Mexico from the 5th to the 12th of August this year. This should give you sufficient time to guarantee Mr. Osanloo's safe release from prison.

As a member of the ILO, Iran has obligations to fulfil, such as respect for freedom of association. We remind you that we have lodged numerous protests with you over the past years and months in response to seeing trade unionists like Farzad Kamangar being executed, and others arrested, harassed and facing the threat of arrest for conducting normal trade union duties. Welcome though the promised release of Mansour Osanloo is, we will not treat it as an excuse to continue to victimise others, and in the light of these events, and recognising the assurance reportedly made to the ILO on Mansour Osanloo, we particularly invite your response to the following questions:

- When will Mansour Osanloo be released?
- When will you return Farzad Kamangar's body to his family for burial?
- When will Iran stop the harassment of trade unionists and begin to respect democratic and independent trade unions?
- Where are the other detainees being held and what possible justification can there be for their arrests?"

ENDS

* The ILO report can be seen at

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_142021.pdf

**A list of the 52 detained trade unionists can be seen at

www.justiceforiranianworkers.org/?page_id=1237

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