

# **Iran : Response of imprisoned worker, Reza Shahabi to the open letter of Saemeh Sultani, an Afghan Women Movement's activist!**

Thursday 11 January 2024, by [SHAHABI Reza](#) (Date first published: 16 November 2023).

Dear Saemeh, neighbour and co-destiny, your sincere message touched me deeply. Some believe Shame is a revolutionary emotion, your letter evokes anger and shame at the same time. Against daily insults, violence, expulsion and humiliation that you are encountering every day as a Citizen of Afghanistan. As an Iranian shame on me, I blame myself for all these years sitting idle and doing nothing while definitely I could have done something.

I am deeply sad and sorry when I see, unfortunately, there are among the oppressed people, even in this prison, among some political and trade union activists who should be the flag bearers of the struggle against all kinds of discrimination, there are those who are still spreading hatred and divisiveness.

Our rulers, with two-edged scissors, one is religious fundamentalism in all matters including politics, education and culture, and the other is rabid, merciless and predatory capitalist relations, have fallen on the lives of the people of Iran, Afghanistan and the region, and then a part of the sociologists and experts Newspapers say that the Taliban's regaining power should be analyzed with the cultural roots of the people of that land. Blaming the victim is a pain, and someone who is also a victim of the same situation and does this, is more painful.

Workers and toilers of Iran are very much oppressed, rightly protesting for their righteous rights and against the spread of poverty and inequality in the country. Unfortunately, some workers are under the influence of anti-Afghan propaganda by government affiliated organizations, such as the Islamic Councils of Labor and Worker's Home (Khaney- e- Kargar). They are absolutely wrong, instead of focusing on the destructive role of government policies and practice such as astronomical embezzlements, looting of public properties, corruptions, and expansion of the luxurious lifestyle of the authorities' children, they say that Afghans have taken our jobs, denying the fact that Afghan migrant workers have been one of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised labor force and working class in Iran for several generations.

We all know that they give a wrong address; we know well the cause of millions of unemployment in Iran, especially among youth who are mostly trained and educated, is not definitely the Afghan hard workers who are mostly underpaid and cheap labor force in the market. You and I know well that the uprisings of 2017, 2019, and 2022 and the water and rightless uprising of the oppressed people from Kurdistan and Balochistan to Khuzestan and Lorestan to Turkmen Sahara and Mazandaran were never against the presence of Afghan migrants and citizens.

Focusing on Afghan toilers and mobilizing public opinion against them is a tactic of the ruling class that has been used against toilers and deprived people of Iran for more than 40 years.

I have no doubt that our loved ones including Gina, Nika and Sarina and Setareh, Hadith and Armita ... did not sacrifice their lives that a year after of their brave uprising for equality and freedom we

witness the rise of hostile, racist and anti-Afghan destructive discourses. These were examples that came to my mind after reading your letter.

However, the "Woman, Live, Freedom" movement showed that another great social force entering in the arena of struggle in society, a powerful force opposing any form of exclusiveness, "insider" and "outsider", "us" and "you" under any pretext (nationality, language, gender, ethnicity, etc.). Let me add the resonance of "Bread, Job, Freedom", which the Afghan women's rights movement has been one of its flag bearers, is an inspiring movement to me and other labor movement activists. I am very glad that the struggle against discrimination against women and for unconditional equality has grown so powerful and irreversible has taken root in the struggle both against patriarchy and divisive anti-migrant and fascist policies, and against oppressive capitalist relations, the roots of discrimination, exploitation, and violence in our lives.

Dear Saemeh, I assure you me and my co-class stand by your side in this struggle, because we share the same destiny as we have the common enemy. And the only way for emancipation is unity and organizations.

**Reza Shahabi**

Evin Prison

Hopping for the establishment of justice in Iran and around the world,

The Workers' Syndicate of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat -e- Wahed)

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**P.S.**

<https://telegra.ph/Response-of-imprisoned-worker-Reza-Shahabi-to-the-open-letter-of-Saemeh-Sultani-an-Afghan-Women-Movements-activist-11-28>