

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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February 1, 2006

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President
Islamic Republic of Iran
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection,
Tehran

VIA FACSIMILE: 98.21.6648.06.65/98.21.649.5880

Dear President Ahmadinejad:

I am writing on behalf of the nine million working men and women of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), not only to protest against the continued detention of Mansour Osanloo, leader of the "Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Vahed Company", but also to protest in the strongest terms the latest wave of arrests of several hundred unionists and their relatives.


The AFL-CIO has learned that the union called for a strike action to take place on January 28 to demand the release of Mansour Osanloo and to recognize the collective bargaining agreement of the Vahed bus company. On January 26, all members of the Syndicate's Executive Board were called to the Revolutionary Court and arrested. Despite the arrests, the Syndicate went ahead with the strike on January 28. In response, security forces used tear gas, batons and even threatened to shoot the strikers. The detention of several hundred workers is an unacceptable response to workers exercising their fundamental labor rights.

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The AFL-CIO joins with the rest of the independent, free and democratic trade union movements worldwide to strongly condemn the harassment of members of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Vahed Company Syndicate. The right to be a member of a trade union and the right to organize an independent labor organization are fundamental workers' rights, protected under the relevant Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The AFL-CIO strongly condemns the arrest of workers exercising their legitimate, internationally recognized trade union rights and demands the immediate and unconditional release of all detained trade unionists.

I look forward to your immediate and decisive action.

Sincerely,


John J. Sweeney
President

JJS/jhl

cc: Mr. Juan Somavia, ILO
H.E. Manoutchehr Motaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Mohammad Jahromi, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
Ambassador Mohammad Reza Alborzi
Mr. Guy Ryder, ICFTU