

Unions : Worldwide Iran protests tomorrow

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Protests for freedom in Iran will be held worldwide tomorrow, 26 June, organised by four global union organisations and their members, representing over 170 million workers.

Demonstrations will be held at Iranian embassies/consulates in Ankara, Bangkok, Brussels, Canberra, Geneva, Jakarta, London, New Delhi, Oslo, Ottawa, The Hague, Tokyo and Wellington. Alongside those events trade unions in other countries are also holding various support actions (See Worldwide Update at www.justiceforiranianworkers.org for more details).

The ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation), EI (Education International), ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) and IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations) called the worldwide action day to demand justice and to protest against the denial of rights within Iran. Amnesty International has backed this campaign.

Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary, commented : "We have exhausted all avenues of reasonable dialogue to persuade the Iranian government to allow basic human and trade union rights. Their answer has been repression and arrests. Given this failure we must protest publicly against what is happening in Iran."

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary, added : "Trade unions across the world are mobilising to express their repugnance for what is being done and what has been done to crush the aspirations of ordinary Iranians. We invite everyone who is concerned at those abuses to join us."

David Cockcroft, ITF General Secretary, said : "Tomorrow we all get the chance to show the government of Iran how discredited it has become and how the whole world feels about the repression and violence it is creating. We intend to raise a worldwide clamour for reform that will force the regime to listen and understand that the time for change has come."

Ron Oswald, IUF General Secretary, concluded : "As trade unions we have long campaigned for the rights of Iranian workers, and that campaign continues. Tomorrow's events are one facet of a continuing struggle that will not go away until those rights are respected."

At time of sending the latest update of events (more will be posted at www.justiceforiranianworkers.org as they are confirmed) is :

In **Australia**, the ACTU Congress adopted a motion in support of the campaign. Unions and community organisations will rally outside the Iranian embassy in Canberra at midday on June 26. The MUA also plans events in Sydney and Melbourne.

In **Austria**, VIDA will use the Danube Island Festival in Vienna from 26 to 28 June to inform visitors about the Iran campaign. The union will distribute flyers, stickers and organise a collection of signatures. The congress of ÖGB (Austrian Trade Union Federation) on 30 June to 2 July in Vienna will also be used to distribute information. Teachers union, GÖD will be joining these activities.

Belgium. Demonstration to be held in Brussels beginning 13:00, with ITUC, EI, ETF, FGTB, CSC, CGSLB, BTB all taking part, along with Amnesty International. BTB is also encouraging every regional section to organise an event on 26 June.

Canada. CUPE, CUPW, CTF, NUPGE, PSAC and others will demonstrate at the Iranian Embassy 245 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, from 12:00 to 14:00.

France. On 26 June, French unions the CFDT, CGT, FO, CFTC and UNSA will submit a letter to the Ambassador demanding the release of trade unions and respect of union rights. At 12:30, there will be a rally in front of the Iranian Embassy in Paris.

HKCTU in **Hong Kong** has confirmed its participation in the action day.

In India the All India Railwaymen's Federation will organise rallies, marches and demonstrations.

ITF unions in **Indonesia** organised a protest action in May after the mass arrests in Tehran on International Workers' Day. Transport unions KPI, JICT, TPK-KOJA, IKAGI and SPKA, together with the teachers union, PGRI, will hold a rally in Jakarta and conduct a prayer meeting in the port of Tanjung Priok.

In **Iran** the ITF-affiliated Tehran Bus Workers Union (Syndicate Vahed) has called on unions around the world "to include the human rights agenda for all the Iranians" in the June 26 global solidarity action day.

Iraq. The General Union of Iraq Port Workers will meet at the union's HQ then demonstrate

Japan. Japanese affiliates of the IUF and ITF, together with the national centre, Rengo, will host a mass meeting on 24 June to adopt a motion in support of the campaign. Representatives of the unions will then present this at the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo on June 26.

Unions attending the **Asia/Pacific Regional Conference** of the ITF in Kuala Lumpur, **Malaysia** unanimously adopted a resolution to reaffirm their participation in the action day. EI affiliate NUTP will be collecting signatures and sending protest letters.

Rail workers of the UMT in **Morocco** will organise a solidarity meeting in Casablanca on 26 June.

In Wellington, **New Zealand**, the unions plan to bring "a brass band, lots of signs, drums and a street play depicting locked up Iranian Unionists" to the Embassy.

Aviation union, ATSSAN in **Nigeria** will hold a solidarity rally at Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos.

In **Norway**, Fagforbundet (Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees) and Norsk Transportarbeiderforbund (Norwegian Transport Workers' Union) will organise a demonstration in front of the Iranian Embassy in Oslo.

In **The Netherlands**, the FNV has requested a meeting at the Embassy of Iran. Gatherings of the AOB teachers' union and FNV Bondgenoten on 26 June will reflect the Justice for Iranian workers campaign.

Turkey. Turkish transport unions, BTS, HAVA-IS and TUMTIS confirm that they will organise a protest action in Ankara in front of the Iranian embassy. They are inviting fellow trade unionists, human rights groups and students to take part. Further action is also planned in Istanbul.

The ITUC's **Geneva** office will also be requesting a meeting with the Iranian Ambassador to Switzerland on 26 June. The International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) has announced its support for the campaign.

In **Sweden** LARARFORBUNDET is discussing joint activities with the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions.

Thailand. In Bangkok, the ITF-Thai committee, together with the national labour centre, SERC, will organise a demonstration at the Embassy and submit a letter to the Ambassador. They will also visit the ILO Office to raise the violation of workers' rights in Iran.

In London, **United Kingdom**, a demonstration will be held at the Iranian Embassy, 16 Prince's Gate, London SW7 1PTF from 12:30 to 13:30.

USA. NEA has written to the US State Department on violation of workers' rights in Iran. AFT is also planning an activity. The Teamsters Union has written to Secretary of State Clinton.

ENDS

For more details please contact

ITF. Press officer Sam Dawson. Tel : +44 (0)20 7940 9260. Email : Dawson_sam@itf.org.uk

ITUC. Press Officer Mathieu Debroux. Tel : +32(0)2 22 40 204. Email : mathieu.debroux@ituc-csi.org

EI. Nancy Knickerbocker. Tel : +32 (0)2 22 40 611. Email : Nancy.knickerbocker@ei-ie.org

IUF. Peter Rossman. Email : iuf@iuf.org