

To workers Organisations

Dear Friends,

Over the last 26 and half years, Iran's Islamic Republic regime has imposed deplorable political, economic and social conditions on workers. The regime dismantled the shoras (councils) and workers organisations, which were set up democratically and freely by employees in various work sectors, identified activists of such organisations, delivered them to courts, expelled many from their workplace, arrested and executed others. Islamic work `shoras` were set up in the absence of any other workers organisation led by the regime's agents. With the ratification of the Labour Legislation in 1990, workers became officially deprived of the right to set up free independent organisations and of the right to strike.

In February 2000 the plan to exempt workshops of 5 employees and less from the Labour legislation was approved, as a result, more than 3 million workers were deprived of the minimum rights stipulated in this legislation. Two years later further legislation allowed a large number of workshops of less than 10 employees to find excuses to be exempted from Iran's labour legislation. During the sixth session of the (Islamic) parliament the plan for 'reorganisation and restructuring of the textile industries' allowed employers to sack thousands of experienced workers and replace them with contract workers forced to work with much less security and pay. The plan to exempt workers in carpet weaving workshops was also approved in the sixth session of the 'Islamic' parliament, legitimising poor working conditions, child labour and long working hours in such workshops.

Two years ago workers from Khatoun Abad mine, who were striking in protest against their sackings, demanding official employment, were attacked by the security forces and at least four workers were killed by counter insurgency troops while many were injured or arrested.

Over the last few years, with unprecedented escalation in privatisation, tens of thousands of workers have lost their job in a country where there is no social security, no health service...In addition workers in various industries in Iran have not received their meagre wages and bonuses for months (in many cases up to 36 months.) Yet these workers keep going to their workplace in order to save their jobs and to protest against non-payment of wages. In IranKhodro (the country's show case car industry) workers have to work three consecutive shifts in order to make ends meet. Over the last 12 months a number of workers in this plant have died from accidents or poor health caused by exhaustion. Privatisation of 'services' in Iran's oil industry is another major attack on the public sector and an attempt to weaken workers unity in this major industry.

The unprecedented gap between the rich and the poor is exasperated by institutionalised corruption amongst Clerics and their immediate relatives. The astronomical wealth gathered by those in power in Iran's Islamic Republic is paralleled by the poverty and destitution of workers and toilers. Any opposition by the workers, any attempt to set up workers organisations independent of the state are brutally attacked by the security forces as demonstrated in early summer in Tehran and this September in Kurdistan.

Although international news about Iran is dominated by Iran's nuclear stance and threats by US and EU countries to refer Iran to the UN Security Council, the main news inside the country is the unprecedented rise in workers struggles. For the first time in the last two decades, concerted, widespread protests by workers against working conditions, lack of job

security, non-payment of wages, the demand to set up independent workers organisations, a decent wage are taking place...The real struggle against neo liberal and global capital in Iran belongs to these workers whose fights to save their jobs and their livelihood have been brutally attacked by security forces and agents of the Islamic regime.

Support these workers, support their struggle, and join us in the 'Week in Solidarity with Iranian workers' to show that:

Iranian workers are not alone

2005-09-27

Coordinators of the Campaign:

The committee for solidarity with Iranian workers- Stockholm,
Abroad Committee of Communist Party of Iran,
Progressive exiled Iranian workers –Switzerland,
Workers Left Unity- Iran,
Union of Iranian Socialists - North America,
Iranian Left Unity- Washington – USA,
Iranian Revolutionary Socialist League (IRSL),
Committee for a Marxist International (Marxist.com),
Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network,
Socialist Solidarity with Iranian Workers- Paris,
Foreign Committee of the Organisation of Revolutionary Iranian Workers (Workers Path)

Please send you messages of support and solidarity to: kargar.iran@gmail.com