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TUR/JS

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Mahmoud Salehi sentenced to four years' imprisonment

Dear President,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 307 affiliated member organisations, with a total membership of 168 million workers in 154 countries and territories, I strongly condemn the prison sentences handed down to Mahmoud Salehi, the former President of the Bakery Workers' Association of the city of Saez, Jalal Hosseini, Mohsen Hakimi and Borhan Divangar for attempting to celebrate May Day in 2004.

The ITUC has been informed that Mahmoud Salehi was sentenced to four years' imprisonment on 11 November 2006 by the Saez Revolutionary Court for congregating to conspire to commit crimes against national security according to article 610 of the Islamic Punishment Act.

Jalal Hosseini and Mohsen Hakimi were each sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the same case on 11 November 2006 on 27 November 2006 respectively. Mohammad Abdipour, who had his case remitted to the Saez Revolutionary Court in the same case, was acquitted. On 17 October 2006 Borhan Divangar, who was also involved in the attempt to celebrate May Day in 2004, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Attempting to celebrate May Day is a legitimate trade union activity and the ITUC condemns these prison sentences in the strongest possible terms.

The ITUC and one of its predecessor organisations the ICFTU have written to you repeatedly to remind you of your obligation to respect the principle of freedom of association by virtue of your membership of the International Labour Organisation.

In view of this obligation the ITUC urges you, Mr. President, to ensure that these sentences are repealed, and that Iran will comply with the principle of freedom of association in the future.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary