

To the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Brussels, 6 March 2008

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and its three affiliated trade union confederations in Belgium, namely the Confédération des syndicats chrétiens (ACV-CSC), the Fédération générale du travail de Belgique (FGTB-ABVV) and the Centrale générale des syndicats libéraux de Belgique (CGSLB-ACLVB), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), Educational International (EI) and Amnesty International (AI) present their compliments to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Belgium and have the honour to draw the urgent attention of the Embassy to the following:

The ITUC has requested to meet with his Excellency the Ambassador today on 6 March 2008, which is declared a Global Day of Action in solidarity with Iranian workers, but like last year our request has remained unanswered. We are therefore delivering this written communication to express our continued and serious concerns as to the detention of Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi, two prominent trade union leaders in Iran.

The two men have been imprisoned on charges that, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), of which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a member, directly relate to their trade union activities. The ITUC, ITF, ETF, ACV-CSC, FGTB-ABVV, CGSLB-ACLVB, EI and AI also have serious concerns about the physical and psychological integrity of the abovementioned trade union leaders, given the history of their previous imprisonment, conditions of detention and state of health.

The international trade union movement also has serious concerns regarding recent sentences handed down to a large number of teachers for engaging in legitimate trade union activities.

We would once more like to draw the attention of the Government of Iran to the fact that the Islamic Republic's membership of the International Labour Organisation imposes a strict obligation under international law to respect workers' freedom of association; this includes refraining from legal persecution of any persons for their trade union activities. In addition, Rule 22(2) of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which stipulates that sick prisoners who require specialist treatment shall be transferred to specialised institutions or to civil hospitals, is also applicable in both abovementioned cases.

Thousands of workers and citizens are again raising their voices today worldwide to say "We want Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi out of jail immediately and unconditionally. We want workers' rights respected in Iran without any delay". Organised by the ITUC and ITF with the full support of Amnesty International, many events are taking place simultaneously around the world to back our demands, including in Wellington, Sydney, Tokyo, Seoul, Bangkok, Jakarta, New Delhi, Istanbul, Basra, Amman, the West Bank, Tunis, Casablanca, Geneva, Brussels, Oslo, London and Toronto, all to deliver our strong message, that the Iranian authorities

cannot continue to obstruct the genuine workers' movement and jail these unionists for their activities.

As the imprisonment of Mr. Osanloo and Mr. Salehi is clearly related to acts performed in their capacity as trade union leaders, we would greatly appreciate that your Excellency draw the urgent attention to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to this matter and ensure that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses its influence with the competent authorities in order to obtain the immediate release of both men and to ensure the physical and psychological integrity, urgent and adequate medical treatment for the imprisoned trade unionists, in accordance with the international obligations of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The ITUC, ITF, ETF, ACV-CSC, FGTB-ABVV, CGSLB-ACLVB, EI and AI, awaiting your reply, avail themselves of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Belgium, the assurance of their highest consideration.