

Message of Mahmoud Salehi from Sanandaj Prison:

To all workers, concerned organizers and participants at the day of action for the freedom of Salehi and Osanloo:

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have called for an international day of action for the freedom of me and Mr. Osanloo, a prominent leader of the Iranian labour movement. My spouse, Najibeh, and I sincerely appreciate this solidarity effort.

It is hereby necessary to express my deep gratitude towards all labour activists and friends who, given the harsh political and economic conditions in Iran, endured so much to launch a campaign in my defense and for the release of Mr. Osanloo.

Moreover, we would like to thank "the Campaign of the Activists of Iranian Workers' Movement Abroad" that have proclaimed August 4th to 11th as a week of joint solidarity actions for freedom of Mr. Osanloo and me.

I have gone through extremely harsh and unbearable situations in the past three decades of my life, struggling for the realization of workers' and people's rights. During all these times, I have been able to keep my morale high and continue the struggle because I have always seen myself as a part of the world's working class, a class that has always been engaged in a struggle for the achievement of its rights and the emancipation of human beings from exploitation, rightlessness, war, racism, the destruction of the environment and other disasters of capitalism. The workers and freedom loving people who will be gathering on August 9th in different countries protesting against the oppression of workers in Iran and for the freedom of Mr. Osanloo and myself are basically one manifestation of workers' class unity.

As you well know, I have been imprisoned despite having only one kidney which is dysfunctional, simply for attempting to participate in an independent international workers' day event. I have been deprived of all appropriate treatments and suitable conditions, despite violation of the international norms and standards, because capitalists in Iran do not want workers to see themselves as a class with their own traditions and international day. They don't want workers to rely on the class solidarity, and if they do, they get penalized. As a labour activist, I am proud that I have not yielded to the demands of capitalists in Iran, and I will pass these dark days with the support of labour activists and freedom loving people.

The struggle for the realization of workers' rights in Iran can be done in various ways. Workers around the world have utilized different methods of struggle. The gatherings on August 9th are one of the means of achieving this goal. As I am cornered in this prison, I would like to find more effective ways of campaigning for the freedom of myself and Mr. Osanloo. Why do I mention this now? Because I believe workers in Iran are in a delicate situation in which they are moving beyond lack of organizations to a new stage in which mass organizations are being formed. We have to be out during this stage. Our freedom gives this assurance to millions of workers that they can achieve their rights, including the right to organize and the independent celebration of international workers' day, without having to pay heavily for it.

I take this opportunity to bring another matter to your attention. The judicial authorities have condemned eleven participants in the May Day 2007 in Sanandaj with prison and whipping sentences. Workers in different industries and trades, from oil to petrochemicals to auto and construction workers have demanded the immediate annulment of these charges. All activists of different movements ought to join this campaign. Those who have no useful role in our society must not be able to punish workers for commemorating their international day.

I have no doubt that participants in the campaign for the repeal of charges against me and Mr. Osanloo, would also add the immediate withdrawal of charges against participants in Sanandaj's

May Day event to their demands. I, as well, in protest against sentencing Sanandaj workers will go on hunger strike for 24 hours as of 10 o'clock on Thursday, August 9, 2007.

Dear concerned friends,

Relying on our organized power and struggles, we will be able to gain our rights and liberate ourselves from the disasters of capitalism. Let's hope for that day!

Mahmoud Salehi and Najibeh Salehzadeh

August 8, 2007