

Europe's dockers pledge solidarity

Key gatherings of transport workers, including dockers, have over the past couple of weeks given strong support to the campaign for freedom for Mansour Osanloo and for full trade union rights in Iran.

On 29 October, 40 dockers' representatives meeting in Brussels under the auspices of the European Transport Workers' Federation responded vigorously to ITF Section Secretary Frank Leys's appeal to ready themselves to deliver support.

Many who attended the meeting de-

clared themselves prepared to organise protests and demonstrations. It was agreed that the ITF would send appropriate campaign materials

On 25-26 October, a meeting in Tunis of the ITF's Executive Board - the federation's top decision-making body - also demanded that Osanloo, his Vice-President Ebrahim Madadi, and other union leaders, including Mahmoud Salehi of the Saquez Bakery Workers' Union be released, and that the Iranian government allow the full exercise of trade union rights.



Mansour Osanloo is the 47 year old head of the Syndicaye Sherkat-E Vahed (Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company Union), who was snatched from the street in July this year and incarcerated in Evin Prison. He is still there, receiving only the most minimal contact with his family and lawyers.

The Tehran Bus Union was founded two years ago by 17,000 bus drivers who were being dangerously overworked and badly underpaid. The union has found itself under constant attack by a government determined to prevent the growth of any independent unions. Osanloo's deputy, Ebrahim Madadi, is being held in another prison.

The authorities continue to refuse to recognise the union. A broad international campaign has been launched by the trade union movement, the aims of which are to free Osanloo and bring about full trade union rights in Iran.

Campaign in action

As part of the ITF's international road transport action week held from 15-21 October, unions participated in the ITF's "Free Osanloo" badge campaign. The campaign opposes the repression against Iranian trade unionists - including Osanloo, Ebrahim Madadi and Mahmoud Salehi, all in prison.

Actions included: a lobby by 10,000 Norwegian workers who wore the Free Osanloo badge to work; a protest rally in front of the Iranian embassy in Brussels, Belgium, involving 200 European trade unionists; and the presentation of a protest letter to the Iranian ambassador by a Central American union delegation attending a meeting of the ITF and the Danish trade union 3F in Managua, Nicaragua.

In Australia, unions organised press conferences expressing sup-

port for Iranian workers, while in Seoul, Korea, activists from two road transport unions distributed badges and leaflets to bus and taxi drivers. Workers in Morocco also signed a protest letter addressed to the Iranian President.

ITF FILM

"Freedom Will Come: The Story of Mansour Osanloo" - a new short film by the ITF highlighting Osanloo's case and the campaign for trade union rights in Iran is available on DVD from the ITF or on the website www.youtube.com. Badges, stickers and other campaign materials are also available from the ITF (orders@itf.org.uk)



Norwegian workers in 9 August protests - see www.freeosanloo.org for more

Indonesian unions visit Tehran families

Hanafi Rustandi, the Chair of the ITF's National Coordinating Committee in Indonesia and President of the Indonesian seafarers' union the KPI (Kesatuan Pelaut Indonesia), arrived on 9 October in Tehran on a visit he first broached with the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta during a worldwide protest day for Osanloo on 9 August 2007.

He was accompanied by Syukur Sarto, General Secretary of the Indonesian KPSPI trade union congress. Both men hoped to visit Iranian trade unionists in jail.

Unfortunately, the prison visit did not take place - it was prevented by the authorities. However, Rustandi and Sarto met with the families of Mansour Osanloo and Ebrahim Madadi.

The families were reported to be delighted at the signal this latest move sends that the plight of the two men has not been forgotten by the outside world.

Hanafi Rustandi said: "Iran should show its commitment to international labour standards and universal human rights."

Since his return to Indonesia, Rustandi has challenged Iran's ambassador in Indonesia to debate its victimisation of trade unionists.

On Indonesian National Television in Jakarta on October 17th, he threw down the gauntlet by offering to go face to face with Iran's ambassador in Jakarta on live television.

"My visit to Iran arose from a promise the ambassador made in August ... I look forward to publicly discussing with the ambassador what has been going on," he said.

Support for sugar strikers

At the end of September, Tehran bus union workers expressed their solidarity with 3000 workers in the Haft Tapeh sugar cane factory in Iran's Khuzestan province, who had staged a strike.

Sugar workers protested against their poor conditions and chanted slogans such as "Haft Tapeh workers are hungry."

Osanloo's sight is treated - but he's still in Evin

International pressure over Mansour Osanloo's eye condition may have helped him to get medical treatment, the ITF believes.

In mid-October information emerged that Osanloo's existing eye condition was very serious and needed immediate treatment - which was not forthcoming, despite lies told to Hanafi Rustandi during his visit.

Both Rustandi and Osanloo's wife Parvaneh were blocked from visiting Osanloo because the authorities said he was receiving treatment - which turned out to be untrue.

Major protests by the ITF, Amnesty International and others followed, and on 22nd October, the ITF welcomed the emergency operation which took place in hospital, where family members were allowed to visit.

Unfortunately Osanloo was quickly returned to Evin prison after the treatment.

Amnesty petition gets huge response

An online petition set up by the human rights organisation Amnesty International to support Osanloo has received one of the biggest responses ever for a campaign of its type. "We got thousands of hits in 24 hours" said Shane Enright of AIUK.

Threat to family

On September 3, Osanloo's wife and sister were threatened after they attempted to meet with Ms. Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who was at the time visiting Tehran.

The women wanted to highlight the case of their husband and brother to the High Commissioner, but were prevented from doing so.