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Iran solidarity

# Socialist Solidarity with the Workers in Iran speaks to the 53rd congress of the CGT

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**The intervention of Sara Salami, representative of Socialist Solidarity with the Workers in Iran at the 53rd congress of the CGT (March 2023)**

First of all, I would like to thank the CGT for this invitation, thanks to which I am able to address you. I represent the association "Socialist Solidarity with the Workers in Iran" which collaborates with the French inter-union collective in support of workers in Iran, of which the CGT is a member.

Of course, the person who should have addressed you at this congress is Reza Shahabi, a member of the leadership of the Vahed, Union of Workers of the Transport Authority of Tehran and its Suburbs, who was a guest at the preceding congress. But he has been imprisoned since May 2022, in the prisons of the Islamic Republic.

Here is now the message that the Vahed union has addressed to the 53rd congress of the CGT.

We send greetings to the participants in the 53rd Congress of the CGT, which is taking place from March 27 to 31, 2023 in Clermont-Ferrand. Our warm greetings to all the workers in France, who have always been pioneers in the struggle against the capitalist world order, and who are at the present time engaged in a decisive struggle against the regressive laws of the French government.

We bring our support to the struggles that you are conducting for your rights. The brutality of the police against the workers who are protesting shows that when capitalist profits and anti-worker laws are at stake, there is no substantial difference between the capitalist states of the world. They show that their response to our protests is based on repression.

Three of our well-known activists, Reza Shahabi, Daoud Razavi and Hassan Saïdi, had already visited France at the invitation of the French trade unions, including the CGT, to participate in public meetings of these unions. Reza Shahabi was invited to the 52nd congress of the CGT in Dijon. They have all three been imprisoned for several months now.

As you know, since September last year, following the assassination of Jina (Mahsa) Amini, our country is experiencing nation-wide protests, known throughout the world as the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising.

The independent trade unions in Iran, including the Union of Workers of the Transport Authority of Tehran and its Suburbs (Vahed), have supported and will continue to support the struggles of women, young people and oppressed peoples in our country. We have firmly condemned the repression, the assassination of demonstrators, the heavy sentences of imprisonment and in particular the death penalty against demonstrators. We demand the unconditional release of all detainees and political prisoners.

We do not expect anything from capitalist states and powers which seek only their own interests.

We rely only on the strength of the working class in Iran and on the support of workers' movements in the world, like yours, dear comrades in France!

Victory to the working class in France, in Iran and in the world!

Long live international workers' solidarity!

Tehran March 27, 2023

Union of Transport Authority Workers of Tehran and its Suburbs (Vahed)

Now I will present to you as briefly as possible the current situation in Iran.

After six months of virulent clashes, the “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising is running out of steam in the face of a ferocious repression which amounts to a crime against humanity, with 469 dead, including 60 children and adolescents, more than 19,000 arrests, disappearances, acts of torture and rape, dozens of death sentences, 4 executions, ... and finally the wave of gas attacks that have hit schools for girls throughout the country. But despite the winding down of the insurrectional demonstrations, anger continues to grow in the face of this bloody repression and the worsening of increasingly unbearable social conditions. The fight continues in different forms and the aspirations of women and men in revolt remain irreconcilable with the dictatorial capitalist regime of the Islamic Republic.

This uprising is the continuation and culmination of the struggles that have been engaged in for a long time. I will cite the most important and most recent ones, the mass movements of Winter 2017/2018 and then that of Autumn 2019, whose slogan was “bread, work, freedom”. They reflected the frustration of a large number of overexploited workers and of the unemployed who are neglected under an extreme ultra-liberal order ruled by a theological dictatorship. They were bloodily repressed. Then there was the great social unrest of workers and pensioners in 2021/2022, with more than 4,000 protest actions for subsistence demand, followed by several waves of repression and arrests of union activists.

The “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising moved the whole world and generated an unprecedented upsurge of international solidarity. Several trade-union organizations, both national and international, gave their support to the risen people and condemned the brutal repression by the Islamic regime: the CGT, Solidaires, the FSU, the CFDT and UNSA in France, the different unions in Germany, England, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Spain, the United States, Indonesia, Norway, Palestine, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovenia,... and the International Trade Union Confederation.

Almost everyone, except the World Federation of Trade Unions. While almost all the conflicts in the world are covered by the WFTU, its silence on the events which have shaken Iran for more than six months is deafening. It is the same silence that it observed about the autumn 2019 movement and the bloody repression that followed. But when we know the close links that this organization has established over several years with representatives of the Islamic regime in Iran, we understand the reasons for this complicit silence.

Indeed, one of the vice-presidents of the WFTU since May 2022 is none other than the leader of a group named “House of the Workers” in Iran. The principal activity of the “House of the Workers”, together with the “Islamic Councils” in the workplaces, consists in controlling and repressing the workers’ movement, to prevent the formation of independent trade unions, and to initial the agreement on the minimum poverty wage every year during the so-called “tripartite negotiations”. A group that is not even a yellow union, but an ideological-political party linked to the Islamic regime, sits as a representative of Iranian workers in the WFTU. Its representatives participate every year at the international conference of the ILO, while the representatives of independent trade unions and workers’ organizations are under lock and key.

The Vice-President of the FSM, Alireza Mahjoub, president of the “House of the Workers”, is not only the leader and coordinator of repression of the workers, but has been personally implicated in beating up working-class activists.

Such a situation within a global workers’ organization is inadmissible.

I will finish with the summary of a [“The Statement of Minimum Demands of Independent Iranian Unions and Civil Society Organizations”](#) that twenty independent trade unions and organizations of civil society in Iran have developed

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and published recently. It brings together in 12 articles progressive social and political demands which can only be accomplished after the disappearance of the Islamic Republic; but they already constitute a base for the development of a progressive and social pole on the left inside the country, confronting right-wing formations within the opposition.

Several trade unions, including the CGT, associations and individuals have given their support to this Charter. The text of this support is at your disposal at the stand of the International Space of the congress, if you would like to sign it.

*Long live the struggle!*

*Long live the CGT!*

*Long live international workers' solidarity!*

PS:

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