

Open letter from the Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Vahed)
to workers' representatives at the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference



Dear sisters, dear brothers, comrades, and representatives of trade union organizations,

At a time when workers and all oppressed populations in Iran are confronted with war, insecurity, deepening economic hardship, repression, and the ongoing violation of their most fundamental labour and human rights, the Vahed Bus Company Workers' Union of Tehran and its suburbs is once again addressing the workers' representatives participating in the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference.

For years, independent trade union organizations and labour activists in Iran have consistently denounced the fact that workers are deprived of the right to form organizations independent of the authorities, to engage in collective bargaining, to strike, and to freely assemble

Trade unions, other independent organizations, and labour activists continue to face dismissal from employment, arrest, imprisonment, threats, intensive security surveillance, and various other forms of repression, solely for defending workers' most basic rights.

Members and activists of the Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company have, in recent years, paid a heavy price for defending workers' rights and for asserting the right to form independent trade union organizations, facing hundreds of arrests and prison sentences. Among them, four members of the Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Vahed) — Nasser Moharramzadeh, Hossein Karimi Sabzevar, Hassan Saeidi, and Reza Shahabi — have, for several years, been dismissed from their jobs and deprived of their professional and social rights and benefits as a result of their trade union activities, their commitment to defending workplace demands, and their struggle for workers' rights. Their families have also, for a prolonged period, been subjected to mounting economic pressure and increasingly severe material hardship as a direct consequence of this repression.

At the same time, the representatives appointed by the Iranian state to international labour bodies, including the International Labour Organization, do not represent independent trade union organizations or the genuine interests of Iranian workers. These individuals are delegates of state-controlled institutions and operate within a framework shaped by government authority and the suppression of independent trade union activity. And, in practice, they form an integral part of the machinery of repression and of obstructing the formation of independent trade unions.

In recent months, the living conditions of working people in Iran have further deteriorated, becoming more difficult and more precarious than ever. For more than 80 days, following the outbreak of the war involving the United States and Israel against Iranian territory on 28 February 2026, our union, along with all independent voices, has in practice been silenced due to widespread internet shutdowns.

Working people, crushed by the devastating consequences of war, militarism, inflation, unemployment, and the deepening of poverty, are also facing widespread internet outages, as well as censorship and intense security pressure.

We firmly oppose war, militarism, economic sanctions that target civilian populations, and all policies that destroy workers' lives and livelihoods.

The recent military attacks, which we condemn as criminal, carried out by the United States and Israel, as well as the destructive and repressive policies of the Islamic Republic, once again demonstrate that it is workers and ordinary people who bear the highest cost of conflicts between dominant powers of the global capitalist system.

The victims of war are workers, children, women, retirees, teachers, drivers, nurses, and millions of ordinary people whose lives, workplaces, and neighbourhoods are destroyed.

As we have repeatedly emphasized in our previous letters and statements, workers in Iran need solidarity with independent workers' struggles, not support for war, foreign interference, repression, or state-affiliated organizations.

The power in Iran has simultaneously intensified repression in the context of war and insecurity. Political prisoners, labour activists, women's movement activists, teachers, students, and other social actors continue to face arrests, prison sentences, and severe security pressure.

We once again reaffirm that repression, imprisonment, executions, and violence cannot eliminate the root causes of social protest or workers' demands for justice, equality, freedom, and human dignity.

Our objectives are clear: the path toward social justice and the emancipation of workers and the working-class lies in strengthening independent working-class organizations, in collective solidarity, and in the organized struggles of workers themselves and other oppressed populations, and not in military intervention or dependence on foreign powers.

We express our deep gratitude for the solidarity actions organized by labour activists and workers' representatives from different countries during the 114th Session of the ILO Conference, as well as during the rally held on June 5.

We call upon them to bring the following urgent demands, formulated by independent trade union organizations and labour activists in Iran, to the attention of international public opinion:

- An immediate end to the war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran.
- The immediate abolition of the death penalty.
- The cessation of repression, arrests, and security operations against social and political activists in Iran.
- The immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned labour activists, political prisoners, and human rights defenders.
- The recognition of workers' right to form trade unions and other independent organizations, to hold assemblies, to engage in collective bargaining, and to exercise the right to strike.
- Access for all working people to basic needs, including a decent wage, job security, healthcare, housing, education, and social protection.
- An end to internet shutdowns and censorship, as well as to restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and communication.

With renewed greetings and solidarity

Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Vahed)

June 1, 2026