

Jafar Azimzadeh who decided to stand up for his basic rights



A Trade Unionist Tried in Tehran Revolutionary Court

18 February 2015



HRANA News Agency – Jamil Mohammadi and Jafar Azimzadeh, two coordinators of the petition of forty thousand workers, at midnight on 30th April last year, were arrested during the security forces raid to their homes and detained for 23 days and 46 days respectively in ward 209 of Evin prison.

These arrests took place after the Work Supreme Council violated Article 41 of the Work Law on the minimum wage which was imposed to workers and was multiple below the poverty line that faced with protests by the coordinators and parts of the petition of forty thousand workers.

They gave an opportunity to Ministry of Labour to revise the minimum wage set for 2014-2015, but because of indifference by Ministry of Labour to this protest and also to the protest which was 2 years ago, demanding minimum wages being defined based on Article 41 of work law, they wrote a letter to Ministry of Work and announced that due to inattentions and imposing a minimum wages multiple below the poverty line, labours are going to participate in a gathering in front of Ministry of Labour's office on 1st of May.

In response to this letter by the coordinators of forty thousand workers petition, security forces raided their homes at midnight on 30th April last year and arrested Jamil Mohammadi and Jafar Azimzadeh and transferred them to ward 209 of Evin Prison. Jamil Mohammadi was tried on 8th of February, and also, Jafar Azimzadeh is going to be tried with accusations of gathering to commit crimes against internal and external security, disturbing public order and security,

disrupting the national security and propaganda against Islamic regime, on 1st of March this year.

Hunger Strike to protest against the false charges

Jafar Azimzadeh Transferred to the Hospital on the 23rd day of Hunger Strike

Posted on: 1st June, 2016



HRANA News Agency – Jafar Azimzadeh secretary of the board of the Free Trade Union of Workers in Iran imprisoned at Evin Prison was taken to hospital on May 21, 2016, following the deterioration of his health condition on the twenty-third day of his hunger strike. Also on May 21, 2016, a warrant was sent to Mr. Azimzadeh's house from Saveh court about another case.

This labour activist said to the prosecutor's representative about the reasons of his hunger strike: "I am not on hunger strike because of furlough, and I have announced my demands clearly in a letter before starting my hunger strike and these demands must be addressed. The first step to achieve this and end the hunger strike, is stopping the execution and reviewing the case by rejecting the charge of acting against national security. Otherwise I will continue my unlimited hunger strike".

Jafar Azimzadeh was sentenced to six years imprisonment and two years deprivation of 'activities in cyberspace and the media and the press' by the Revolutionary Court in 2015.

The labour activist was one of coordinators of scroll of the petition signed by forty thousand workers to increase the minimum income. He has been sentenced to six years in total on charges of gathering and colluding with intention to act against the national security, disturbing public order and propaganda against the regime.

Salvati, judge of branch 15 of Tehran Revolutionary Court, has not accumulated the labour activist's time under detention in the verdict.

Azimzadeh's charges were, the formation of the Free Union of Iranian Workers, the formation of the National Union of Dismissed and Unemployed Workers in cooperation with the Committee of Labour Unions, gathering in Laleh Park in 2009 at the International Workers' Day, guiding the labours in a protest in 2005, constituting, planning and management of workers' protests in 2014.

Azimzadeh also has been sentenced because of gathering signatures for the petition of forty thousand workers and protest in front of Parliament and the Ministry of Labour, protesting against the approved basic income, being the representative of thousands of workers against Saeed Mortazavi, protesting against the changes in labour law, meeting with other independent workers' organizations such as Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, Syndicate of Workers of Neishekar, the Coordinating Committee and interviews with some overseas media.

Jafar Azimzadeh was arrested on the eve of May Day in 2014 in Tehran by security agents and after 46 days was released from Evin prison on a bail of 1 billion IRR.

On November 8, 2015 he was summoned to Evin Prison to serve his sentence.

Support for Jafar started to build up from all sides within Iran and throughout the world

Workers, teachers protest in support of political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh



Hundreds of workers, teachers and youths rallied outside the office of Iranian president Hassan Rouhani in Tehran on the morning of Wednesday, June 29, in support of political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh who marked his 62nd day on hunger strike on this day. The protesters in this rally demanded urgent action to save Azimzadeh's life.

Gathering from different cities across Iran, protesters were seen chanting, "Workers don't belong in prison. Workers' wages is not lashing," "Jailed workers must be freed," "Political prisoners must be freed," "62 days have passed and Jafar remains in jail," "Plunderers are free, workers are in jail." The repressive intelligence agents and police prevented anyone from taking any video footage or still images of the rally.

The day prior to this gathering Rasoul Baddaghi, Ismaeel Abdi and Mahmoud Beheshti Langroudi, a number of jailed teachers who have recently been released, were joined by 180 other teachers and workers issuing a statement announcing a hunger strike from Thursday, June 30, to Saturday, July 2 in support of Azimzadeh.

Moreover, Mr. Ali Moezi and a number of other political prisoners in the prisons of Evin and Gohardasht underscored the repressive regime and its so-called judiciary are responsible for Azimzadeh's health and well-being, adding they, too, will be on hunger strike starting Tuesday, June 28.

Azimzadeh has gone unconscious many times in the past few days. Despite his conditions, Hajilou, the regime's representative in the public prosecutor's office has said they will do nothing in the case of Azimzadeh losing his life.

Azimzadeh has been on hunger strike protesting the "violation of the fundamental rights of teachers and workers," "their detention and prosecution under bogus reasons" and raising charges such as "measures against security" against labour activists and teachers.



Mother of murdered Iranian dissident supports political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh

21 June 2016



Support for imprisoned Iranian workers' rights activist Jafar Azimzadeh's hunger strike has come from all sides; allies in the West, fellow political prisoners and the mother of a murdered Iranian dissident.

Sholeh Pakravan, the mother of Reyhaneh Jabbari, has spoken prominently about the human rights abuses in Iran since her daughter was executed in 2014, and has now written an open letter of support to Mr. Azimzadeh. In the letter, she addressed current critical issues including the negligence to this political prisoner and

flogging the workers of Agh Darreh and Bafgh. These brutal acts are an attempt to create a society with downtrodden, cheap and silent workforce so the foreign investors aren't confronted with the reality of the conditions and the country can become a global trader.

She wrote that the silent execution of contractor workers and the detainment of their representatives illustrate the official return of slavery in Iran.

She encouraged the Iranian people to stand up against the regime, warning of a terrible future if the regime is allowed to prevail. She wrote: "The fate of your children will be nothing but suffering and pain. Talk about your livelihood demands in the street. Let your wishes and expectations be clearly met by the authorities. Support the demands of prisoners' representatives and talk about them in private and public forums."

She continued with this sad metaphor of Iran. She wrote: "Behind the charming smiles of the officials, hides the crushed body and soul of the imprisoned children of Iran, the hunger strikes, the pressure of interrogation and cowardly provisions. Behind the big wall of lies, there exist the hundred invisible gallows which silently executes our loved ones."

Mr. Azimzadeh, a political prisoner who is being held in Evin Prison, has been on hunger strike for 51 days so far.

Sholeh Pakravan's daughter, Reyhaneh Jabbari, was executed on October 25, 2014 for killing an intelligence agent of the mullahs' regime who tried to rape her seven years earlier when she was just 19 years old.

Renowned scholars & activists in solidarity with Jafar Azimzadeh & denouncing flogging selectness against workers in Iran



Noam Chomsky, Greg Albo, Kevin B. Anderson, Cyrus Bina, John Clarke, Steve Early, Bill Fletcher Jr., Safia Gahayr, Sam Gindin, Brad Hornick, Boris Kagarlitsky, Michael A. Lebowitz, David McNally, Derrick O'Keefe, Piergiorgio (Pier) Moro, Mike Palecek, Leo Panitch, Misagh Parsa, Herman Rosenfeld, Ingo Schmidt, Peter Tatchell, Michael Yates, George Binette, Alex Callinicos, Joseph Daher, Mohan Dutta, Alex Gordon, Amir Hassanpour, Peter Hudis, Pranav Jani, Laleh Khalili, Paul Le Blanc, Shahrzad Mojab, John Rees, Steven Salaita, Kim Scipes, Ahmad Seyf, David, Michael Smith, Rona Smith ...:

The information in the accompanying document has come to our attention, and we would like to protest the flogging sentences against Agh Dareh Gold Mine workers in Iran and to express our serious concerns about health and wellbeing of Mr. Jafar Azimzadeh, a labour activist and chairperson of the Board of the Free Union of Iranian Workers, who has been on hunger strike since April 29, 2016.

Jafar Azimzadeh has been serving a 6 year prison sentence in Evin Prison since November 2015 merely for his labour activities. He was charged with "assembling and colluding with intent to act against national security"; this seems to be one of the key charges that the Iranian government has routinely been using against labour activists. Jafar is on indefinite hunger to protest against the fabricated charges of "gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security" and other security-related charges against himself and other labour activists and to denounce the ever-increasing anti-worker policies of the Iranian government.

As stated above, we are extremely outraged over the brutal flogging sentences against 17 Agh Dareh Gold Mine workers in Iran which were carried out publically in May 2016. These workers were protesting their right to job security and protection against layoffs. What's more, we have been informed that nine Bafgh Mining Company workers in Yazd Province have also been sentenced to imprisonment and tens of lashes in recent days. Their sentences for the time being has been suspended but will be carried out if they breach court orders. Bafgh mine workers (Iran Central Iron Ore Company Bafgh) were prosecuted following their strike actions that started in 2014. Such inhuman sentences against protesting workers are the gross violation of every internationally recognized convention and achievements on the rights of workers and human rights in general. Flogging is an extremely cruel act and a form of torture and must be stopped and banned immediately.

We are deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of Jafar Azimzadeh and other jailed workers in Iran and call for their immediate and unconditional freedom. The Iranian government is responsible for the life of Jafar Azimzadeh and other political prisoners. At the same time, we are sincerely urging Jafar Azimzadeh to end his hunger strike; the struggle for workers' right is strengthened when the labour movement's activists are alive and well.

The above statement was first signed by the following renowned scholars and labour/ progressive activists on June 15, 2016. Signatories in alphabetical order:

Greg Albo, Department of Political Science, York University & Co-editor of the Socialist Register;

Kevin B. Anderson, Professor of Sociology at University of California, Santa Barbara;

Cyrus Bina, Distinguished Research Professor of Economics, University of Minnesota, USA & Fellow, Economist for Peace and Security;

Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor & Professor of Linguistics (Emeritus), The Massachusetts Institute of Technology;

John Clarke, Organizer, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty-

Steve Early, Labour activist & journalist, lawyer and organizer, USA

Bill Fletcher Jr., Talk show host, writer & activist (USA);

Safia Gahayr, Chair - International Solidarity Committee, CUPE Ontario;

Sam Gindin, Retired Assistant to the President of Canadian Auto Workers (now UNIFOR) and the former Packer Chair in Social Justice at York University;

Brad Hornick, PHD Candidate, Simon Fraser University, active with System Change Not Climate Change;

Boris Kagarlitsky, Sociologist & Marxist theoretician, Director of the Institute of Globalisation and Social Movements

Michael A. Lebowitz, Professor Emeritus, Economics Department, Simon Fraser University, Canada;

David McNally, long-time left scholar-activist; Professor, Department of Political Science, York U;

Derrick O'Keefe, Author and Journalist, Editor at Ricochet Media;

Piergiorgio (Pier) Moro, Secretary, Australia Asia Worker Links;

Mike Palecek, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers;

Leo Panitch, Distinguished Research Professor of Political Science at York University & Co-

editor of The Socialist Register;
Misagh Parsa, Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College, USA;
Herman Rosenfeld, writer, educator, and activist; member of Socialist Project;
Ingo Schmidt, Academic Coordinator of the Labour Studies Program at Athabasca University, Canada;
Peter Tatchell, Director, Peter Tatchell Foundation;
Michael Yates, Associate Editor of Monthly Review

The following prominent scholars and activists endorsed the above statement as of June 16, 2016:

George Binette (Camden UNISON Branch Secretary), London;
Alex Callinicos, Professor of European Studies, Department of European & International Studies King's College, London;
Faramarz Dadvar, Socialist Activist, USA;
Joseph Daher, Assistant Professor, Lausanne University, Switzerland - Anti capitalist activist;
Mohan Dutta, Professor, National University of Singapore- Department of Communications and New Media;
Alex Gordon, former President, National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (RMT), Britain;
Amir Hassanpour, Assistant Professor (Ret.), University of Toronto;
Peter Hudis, Author, Professor of Philosophy, Oakton Community College;
Pranav Jani, English and Postcolonial Studies, the Ohio State University;
Laleh Khalili, Professor of Middle East politics, SOAS, University of London;
Paul Le Blanc, Professor of History, LaRoche College, Pittsburgh USA;
Shahrzad Mojab, Professor, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education OISE/University of Toronto;
John Rees, Counterfire, Visiting Research Fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London, Spokesperson for People's Assembly Against Austerity;
Steven Salaita, American University of Beirut;
Kim Scipes, Associate Professor of Sociology, Purdue University Northwest, Westville, Indiana, USA;
Ahmad Seyf, Senior Lecturer, Regent's University, London;
David, Michael Smith, Professor, Department of Social Sciences, University of Houston-Downtown, Houston Socialist Movement;
Rona Smith, Educator, Houston Socialist Movement, USA;
We just created a new petition and hope you can sign -- it's called: Supporting joint statement in solidarity with workers in Iran: Free Jafar Azmizadeh! Stop flogging sentences against protesting workers!

Read more about it and sign it here: <http://bit.ly/1Qby89e>

Steadfastness to achieve the goal

Jailed labour activist Jafar Azimzadeh condemns Iran's government in open letter

20 June 2016, by Craig Davison in Human Rights



Jafar Azimzadeh, a major labour organizer who as President of the Free Union of Workers of Iran coordinated a campaign for raising the minimum wage, was sentenced to 6 years in prison in 2015 for “intent to act against national security” and for “propaganda against the Islamic Republic”, both of which violate Iran’s Islamic Penal Code. He has been on hunger strike against his imprisonment for

51 days in Evin Prison, a site where many other political prisoners are also held. This week he published an open letter from his confinement, fiercely condemning Iran’s President Rouhani and his government.

An open letter to Mr. President



As a labour activist, I am aware of the government’s attitude towards the protests of workers’ and teachers’ unions. I am the coordinator of the protest petition of 40 thousand workers to increase wages. As I also happen to have witnessed the government’s attitude towards this petition personally, I would like to remind you of some tips and to let the public community judge

your statement on the government’s approach towards union protests ...

In addition to extensive political and security measures for labour protests in the past three years, the heresy of dealing with such protests in Rouhani’s government was so unprecedented during the last two decades that the judiciary in Khuzestan province has attempted to officially ban labour protests at the workplace. I stress that the official announcement of the labour protest was issued by the Judiciary to all labour centres. As I mentioned in paragraph 2, such decisions towards labour protests are not made by the Judiciary but it is reached by security institutions, the governor and general offices. After that, the order will be implemented when the judicial formalities have been made.

After three years in Rouhani’s government, most efficient activists of independent organizations affiliated to workers and teachers have heavy political and security charges and prolonged convictions. The majorities of these activists have been detained by the Ministry of Intelligence and have been convicted of gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security. Their cases have been also referred to revolutionary courts and demanded the maximum penalty. This specific case is a heresy made by Rouhani’s government during the past three years. All efficient activists in independent organizations have been detained and framed unconditionally by the Ministry of Intelligence and they have been also deprived of the lowest level of assertiveness as well as the union activities of collecting signatures to fulfil demands, contribution and advice to others, social interaction with other union members and limited gatherings in the premises of the Ministry of Labour and the parliament.

Azimzadeh's mother has written him a letter expressing her support that has been made available to the public. In it, she expressed concern about her son's treatment, as well as that of other labour activists, who often suffer corporal punishment by Iran's government.

Tehran's Prosecutor: I Will Do Nothing for Jafar Azimzadeh, Even if He Dies

27th June, 2016



HRANA News Agency – Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi, Tehran's prosecutor after accepting to meet the wife of Jafar Azimzadeh, secretary of the board of the Free Trade Union of Workers in Iran imprisoned at Evin Prison on 59th day of hunger strike, told her that he would do nothing for her husband even if he dies, yesterday.

Jafar Azimzadeh, has been recently kept at Sina Hospital in Tehran following the deterioration of his health condition. He is on the 60th day of hunger strike protesting "suppression labour and teacher activists through security charges".

"Mr. Azimzadeh's wife went to meet Mr. Jafari Dowlatabadi to follow the case of her husband and his demands. But Mr. Dowlatabadi told her with anger that he would do nothing for him, even if he would die. He is responsible for it and it's no one's business." A source close to Jafar Azimzadeh told HRANA, yesterday.

Azimzadeh's 62-day hunger strike has drawn increased attention over the past month as his condition grew increasingly critical. Fears for his health were compounded by the statements of his prosecutors, saying they would do nothing to

prevent his death in the event of an emergency.

Azimzadeh has been on hunger strike protesting the "violation of the fundamental rights of teachers and workers," "their detention and prosecution for bogus reasons" and raising charges such as "acting against security" against labour activists and teachers.

Mr. Azimzadeh, who was arrested on November 8, 2015, is currently serving a six-year prison sentence in Ward 8 of Evin Prison for engaging in peaceful and legitimate trade union activities. A key demand of Mr. Azimzadeh and other workers' union activists is for the authorities to drop the charge of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and other national security charges in cases of union activities.

Mr. Azimzadeh sent a statement out of Evin Prison following the release on bail of fellow political prisoner Ismail Abdi, Secretary General of Iran's Teachers' Trade Association (ITTA), vowing to continue his hunger strike until the "demands of millions of teachers and workers" are met.

He will be summoned for a new court date soon.

Perseverance brings its fruits

Breaking news: Iran Political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh freed, clerical regime surrendered

Following perseverance and determination, after 64 days of hunger strike by the prominent political prisoner, Jafar Azimzadeh, and in line with an international wave of support together with solidarity of hundreds of other political prisoners with Jafar, the Iranian criminal regime surrendered to the will of determination and was forced to free Mr. Azimzadeh.

About 8 o'clock PM local time Tehran (1530 GMT) today, Thursday, June 30, 2016 the mullahs' regime was forced to finally back down and temporarily free this firm and unwavering political prisoner after 64 days of hunger strike, promising to reevaluate his case in a fair trial.

Following the order to release this political prisoner, Jafar decided to victoriously end his 64-day hunger strike.

During past two months a wave of activities both inside and outside Iran went underway with dozens of other political prisoners expressing solidarity with him by going on hunger strike themselves.

Many people, including friends, relatives and human rights activists demonstrated called for the freedom of this political prisoner. Numerous rallies took place in front of the mullahs' parliament, the office of the president and outside the Sina Hospital, where Jafar was being treated. Social media have been reporting his condition on the daily basis.

Jafar Azimzadeh, a labour rights' activist and a labourer himself was jailed for defending the rights of workers in Iran about 9 months ago and was sentenced to 6 years in prison. He went on hunger strike 64 days ago where his health condition deteriorated to the point that doctors said he is fast reaching the point of no return on his condition.

Jafar release created a wave of joy and jubilations among his family and friends. Dozens of other political prisoners who joined Jafar in hunger strike celebrated his release tantamount to their own victory.



Earlier that day, hundreds of Iranians had rallied outside President Hassan Rouhani's office in Tehran, demanding Azimzadeh's release. Azimzadeh was detained while he was leader of the Free Union of Workers of Iran for his union activities. His imprisonment became a focal point for workers' rights in Iran, where state crackdowns on unions and regressions in workers' rights have increased.

Broken In Body – Maybe

But In Spirit - Never



We still have to be vigilant and persuasive in our campaign
for human rights in IRAN

Amnesty International- USA

Iran: Release Jafar Azimzadeh (UA 152/16)

URGENT ACTION

29 JUNE 2016

Iranian trade unionist **Jafar Azimzadeh**, the Chair of the Free Union of Workers of Iran, ended his two-month-long hunger strike on 30 June after he was granted leave. He remains at risk of being returned to prison. If jailed, he will be a prisoner of conscience.

1) Please write immediately in Persian, English, Arabic, French, Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that Jafar Azimzadeh is not returned to prison, and that his conviction and sentence are quashed, as they arise solely from his peaceful trade union activities;
- Reminding them of their obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both of which impose on them an obligation, among others, to respect and protect the right of everyone to form and join trade unions.

2) For the full Urgent Action, including appeal addresses and further information, please click on the Word or PDF version below.

3) Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact!

- **EITHER** send a short email to uan@aiusa.org with "UA 152/16" in the subject line, and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent,
- **OR** fill out this [short online form](#) to let us know how you took action.

Source: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-involved/take-action-now/iran-release-jafar-azimzadeh-ua-15216>