

Iranian regime must stop repression and violation of human and trade union rights

The Trade Union Organizations signatories of this text denounce the repeated violation of the basic human rights and democratic freedoms in Iran, and most particularly violation of rights and freedoms of demonstrators and strikers who took part in the huge protest movement since December 28, 2017 and were subjected to violent repression, deaths, arbitrary arrests, tortures, etc.

These recurring human rights violations and continuous repression of people's liberties outrage many trade union organizations around the world, including those affiliated to the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC).

We, trade unionists, are particularly concerned by the widespread practice of these repressions.

At the end of December and beginning of January hundreds of thousands of people - men and women - including a large number of workers, unemployed, youth and students protested in more than 80 cities of the country. Among them, however, was a part of the population that the regime liked to present, until then, as its popular base. They were protesting primarily against the high cost of living, unemployment, corruption, discrimination against women. These protesters were faced with a massive crackdown.

Even before the emergence of this latest protest movement, the trade unionists were always persecuted and imprisoned. While Islamic Republic of Iran is officially a member of International Labour Organisation (ILO), it prohibits free and independent trade unionism which is in contrast to and in violation of standards and norms of ILO.

In the prisons of this country, where the practice of torture is common, the conditions of detention of prisoners of conscience and unionists, whether men or women, are appalling.

For several years, Trade Union Organizations signatories of this text have taken initiatives at various levels to denounce these unacceptable situations, and to implement solidarity actions in order to exert pressure on Iranian regime to release the imprisoned trade unionists.

Various European trade unions repeatedly protested against these violations addressing the Iranian authorities, international instances, European governments, and as regards the French trade unions addressing president Macron.

The recent rhetoric of the Iranian authorities suggests that they plan to respond to the uprising in a more ruthless way. For instance, Iran's Minister of the Interior has declared the recent protests illegal and has warned that people who continue taking part in them would risk serious punishments. He has threatened to bring charges of "enmity against God" against the leaders and organizers of events, which is considered a serious crime punishable by the death penalty.

The signatory organizations demand that the claims brought by the Iranians who expressed their concerns on the streets in recent weeks, to be heard by the authorities.

They also demand, in particular:

- Release of all those arrested during and after the January demonstrations, the total number of which having been estimated in early January at 3700,
- Release of prisoners of conscience and trade unionists,
- Effective ban of torture and respect for human rights for prisoners,

- Setting up of an investigation commission to launch a fully independent investigation into the death of prisoners as a result of the suppression of recent protests (12 cases recorded late January),
- Respect by the Iranian authorities of the founding principles of the United Nations and ILO, the international organizations of which Iran is a member.