

September 25, 2017

BY: E-MAIL

His Excellency, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

-and-

His Excellency, President Hassan Rouhani

Your Excellencies:

Free Iranian jailed labour activist Reza Shahabi now.

On behalf of the 260,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in Ontario, (CUPE Ontario), we are writing to protest the continued persecution of Reza Shahabi, an Executive Board member and Treasurer of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran Bus Workers' Company, who was once again unjustly incarcerated for trade union activity and has been on a hunger strike in protest of that unjust incarceration since August 9, 2017.

We write not only to express our serious concerns for this incarceration, but to also bring attention to Mr. Shahabi's deteriorating health. Based on confirmed reports, it is clear he is experiencing serious medical issues, including severe headaches and dizziness, drops in his blood pressure, weight loss and digestive problems. While we understand he was taken to the prison's medical clinic on August 31st, it is also reported that he has not received the specialized medical care he clearly requires.

The unjust treatment of Mr. Shahabi for union activity, since he was first violently arrested in June 2010 while on the job driving a bus, was, unfortunately, just the beginning of ordeal that continues to this day. After spending nineteen months in solitary confinement, he was given six years of prison sentence, banned from any union activities for five years and faced severe financial penalties. Due to extensive physical stress and torture during interrogations, Mr. Shahabi also suffered from back and neck dislocation and has had to go under surgery twice. After enduring prison for years, he had been under medical leave of absence based on coroner's recommendation.

However, now it appears that Mr. Shahabi, whose sentence was supposed to have been finished, has not only been re-incarcerated, but will have an additional 968 days added to his sentence, to cover the entire time he was on an approved medical leave. The conditions faced by Mr. Shahabi, for trade union activities, are quite simply appalling.

We strongly condemn the continued targeting and unjust re-incarceration of Reza Shahabi. We also denounce ongoing persecution and arrests of labour activists in Iran and demand the immediate and unconditional freedom of Reza Shahabi and all other detained labour activists in Iran. Please know that the members of CUPE Ontario consider the Iranian government responsible for the health and wellbeing of Reza Shahabi and will be vigorously monitoring his case.

Sincerely,



Fred Hahn,
President



Candace Rennick,
Secretary-Treasurer

Cc: The Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran – High Council of Human Rights,
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations,
Tehran Judiciary,
Tehran Bus Company