

## **[2010-05-03] Iran: Teacher trade unionists continue to be targeted by authorities**

**As seems to become a detestable tradition, leaders and members of the Iranian Teacher Trade Associations have been arrested and detained in the days preceding Labour Day and the National Teachers Day, celebrated on 2 May in Iran.**

Unabashed by these assaults, the Associations' statement released to mark the National Teachers Day included seven demands focusing on the continued detention and unfair sentences of the teacher unionists. Special focus was given to the case of Farzad Kamangar, who remains in death row. The Coordinating Council of Iranian Teacher Trade Associations also announced that its executive members would be on hunger strike from 2 to 8 May to highlight their demands.

In the lead-up to Labour Day and Teachers Day, arrests and harassments of teacher unionists included:

- On 16 April 2010, a number of members of the Central Council of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teacher Trade Associations, including teacher representatives from Yazd, Tafriz, Hamedan, Rasht and Tehran, gathered in Yazd to agree on this year's National Teachers Day statement. They were cautioned by local representatives of the secret police and had to break up their meeting.
- On 24 April, three members of the Iranian Teacher Trade Association of Hamedan, Ali Najafi, Asghar Mohammad Khani and Jalal Naderi, were summoned to the local secret police office. Ali Najafi was detained for 24 hours. All of them were interrogated again on 26 April.
- Mohammad Beheshti Langeroudi and Aliakbar Baghani were summoned to the Tehran Investigation Office of the Intelligence ministry on 24 April. Even though they were released a couple of hours later, on 29 April, their homes were simultaneously stormed and searched by the secret police. The two men were taken away and there is no news on their whereabouts.
- On 22 April, Tofigh Mortezaipoor and Hasan Kharatian, of the Iranian Teacher Trade Association of Tabriz, were summoned to the local secret police offices. On 26 April, the house of Tofigh Mortezaipoor was searched and his personal items, including his computer and his notes were confiscated. Another interrogation followed on April 27.
- Ali Sadeghi and Mohammad Tavakoli, of the Iranian Teacher Trade Association of Kermanshah, were handed down their verdicts regarding their participation in the teachers' gathering in 2006. They were sentenced to flogging and fines by the criminal court in Kermanshah for "organizing illegal gatherings".

In April, EI addressed another letter to the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei expressing concern about the continued detention of teacher unionists throughout Iran's New Year celebrations. The teacher unionists still in detention include Farzad Kamangar, Rasoul Bodaghi, Hashem Khastar and Bahman Goudarzzade. EI called on the Iranian authorities to stop the pressure on the trade unions, to release the detained teacher union activists immediately and to withdraw all charges against them.

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