

## **Urgent Action Appeal**

**[2008-08-14] Iran**

### **Stop the execution of teacher unionist Farzad Kamangar**

Dear colleagues,

Farzad Kamangar, a 33-year old teacher and former trade unionist from the Kurdistan Province of Iran, is at risk of execution following the ruling issued at an unfair trial.



In recent weeks, EI has written to the Iranian Government to request a fair trial for Farzad Kamangar and other union activists who are under arrest. In spite of joint efforts from various national and international organisations to have death sentence of Farzad Kamangar commuted, it was upheld by the Supreme Court on 11 July 2008. In addition, Iranian trade union colleagues and human rights activists who show solidarity with Farzad are being subjected to pervasive intimidation by the Iranian authorities.

The arrest, detention and condemnation of trade unionists because of their human and trade union activities are not only serious violations of trade union rights, but also create an atmosphere of fear prejudicial to trade union development in Iran.

#### **Background Information**

Kamangar, who worked as a teacher in rural areas and was a human rights activist, is accused of being a terrorist through his alleged affiliation to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK. According to his lawyer, Khalil Bahramian, there is no evidence to justify the judgement that Kamangar has "endangered national security". His lawyer, who was not permitted to defend him, says Farzad's trial was not in accordance with article 168 of the Iranian Constitution: "Political and press offences will be tried openly and in the presence of a jury, in courts of justice." In this case, only one judge reviewed the case within five minutes and the defendant was not allowed to speak.

A support committee composed of members of the Teacher Trade Association, former colleagues of Kamangar and human rights attorneys, including Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, was established on July 21, 2008 to defend the civil rights of Farzad Kamangar and to undertake legal actions to have his death sentence commuted. Following the first meeting of the Committee, three teachers were arrested and taken to the Intelligence Detention Centre in Sanandaj, in the Iranian province of Kurdistan. Two – Hassan Ghorbani and Kaveh Rostami – are still in detention, while the third, Ahmad Ghorbani, was released on bail after two weeks. Farzad's supporters and their family members are regularly intimidated through phone calls by the Ministry of Intelligence and National Security.

In addition to opposing the death sentence, EI condemns the torture of Farzad Kamangar while in detention and the subsequent denial of medical treatment. When his family was last allowed to visit him in prison, his injuries were such that he was unable to walk. EI has urged the Iranian authorities to investigate the reports of torture and to ensure that, in future, no detainee is subject to torture or ill-treatment.

To date, EI has no affiliate in Iran. However EI has received an application for membership from the Iranian Teacher' Trade Association and a representative of that organisation was invited as a guest to the last EI Congress in Berlin in 2007. Upon his return from the EI Congress, Mohammad Khaksari was harassed by the security forces. Mr Khaksari is also an active member of the 'Committee to Save Farzad' and he is among those who are being harassed by the Ministry of Intelligence.

### **What can you do?**

As a national teacher association, you can undertake the following actions:

1. **Give visibility to the situation of Farzad Kamangar** and of teachers in Iran in your magazine, on your website, during meetings and via other appropriate means.
2. Send an **online message** to to the Iranian president to appeal for a review of the case of Farzad Kamangar.
3. **Write to the Iranian authorities** > Your organisation is invited to appeal the Iranian government to:
  - o review the case of Farzad Kamangar and to give further clarification about the charges against him and other teacher trade unionists currently detained;
  - o commute Farzad's death sentence;
  - o desist from the use of torture;
  - o allow Farzad Kamangar to have unimpeded contact with his family and his lawyer;
  - o stop the harassment against the relatives of Farzad Kamangar and members of the Committee to Stop Farzad Kamangar's Death Sentence;
  - o be open for a peaceful dialogue regarding the professional concerns of teachers in Iran.

EI will of course keep you updated on all developments. For additional information or to discuss possible action, contact the EI Human and Trade Union Rights Coordinator at [headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org) or +32 2 224 0680

Thank you for your solidarity and ongoing support for our Iranian colleagues.

Yours faithfully,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary

### **Headquarters**

Address: **Education International, 5 boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels, Belgium**  
Tel: **+32 (0)2 22 40 611**  
Fax: **+32 (0)2 22 40 606**  
General enquiry: **[headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org)**  
Public relations: **[info@ei-ie.org](mailto:info@ei-ie.org)**



## **Help save an Iranian educator from death row**

Aug 20, 2008 10:36 AM

Education International, the world's largest global union federation, representing teachers and education workers around the world, has released an urgent appeal on behalf of an Iranian teacher and trade unionist sentenced to death after an unfair trial. The AFT is a constituent member of EI.

According to EI, Farzad Kamangar, a 33-year-old teacher and human rights activist from Iran's Kurdistan Province, was convicted in February of "endangering national security" and "enmity against God." The death penalty, handed down by the Tehran Revolutionary Court, was later confirmed by the Iranian Supreme Court. Farzad was not allowed to speak at his trial, nor was his lawyer allowed to defend him against the charges, which stemmed from his alleged ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

There are reports that Farzad has been tortured during his detention, and colleagues who have come to his defense have been intimidated or jailed.

To learn more about Farzad's plight, and to find out how you can help an educator victimized by an anti-union regime, go to the Urgent Action Appeal section of the Education International site.