



The Benenson Society

Over the years Benenson has joined other Human rights groups in campaigning for a number of Iranians (see a short update below). Iran has one of the more oppressive regimes in the world and regularly executes prisoners. There are some signs of opening up to the world and a number of countries are having increased contacts with Iran. It is at such times that a country like Iran may be more sensitive to world opinion, and thus this new campaign for Jafar Azimzadeh is has been on a hunger strike throughout this May (see below for details)

- **Behrouz Javid-Tehrani**, an Iranian student, spent eleven years in and out of prison - **released in 2012**
- **Isa Saharkhiz**, 62 years old, a prominent reformist journalist with sever health problems – **still in prison**
- **Amir Yaghoub-Ali**, a 21-year-old student from Tehran, is a member of the Committee of the One Million Signatures Campaign, which calls for an end to gender discrimination in Iranian laws, **released after a year in prison**
- **Sakineh Ashtiani**, mother-of-two, was sentenced to be stoned to death for committing adultery – **freed in 2014 after nine years on death row**
- **Gholamreza Khosravi** was arrested in 2006 on charges of donating money to an opposition satellite TV station - **executed in 2014**

Iranian political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh has been on a hunger strike for most of May. He was arrested in 2015 for organizing workers into unions and was sentenced to six years in gaol. (see article that follows)



NCRI - Iranian workers' rights activist and political prisoner Jafar Azimzadeh is on Day 23 of an indefinite hunger strike in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison against the regime's clampdown on union activities in Iran.

Azimzadeh's health is reported to have deteriorated significantly and he is under pressure by the mullahs' regime to end his protest.

He has reportedly become weak, with his vision deteriorating, and he has developed kidney problems.

The Tehran prosecutor's office on Tuesday demanded that he end his hunger strike. On Tuesday he had to be transferred by car to the visitor's hall to see his wife as he was unable to walk after becoming frail due to his hunger strike.

According to reports, officials from the Tehran prosecutor's office have suggested to Azimzadeh that he would be given an opportunity to take long-term leave from prison if he breaks his fast.

Reports say that Azimzadeh replied to the representative of the Tehran prosecutor's office: "I did not go on hunger strike in order to be permitted to have prison leave. In the letter that I had written prior to beginning my hunger strike, I set out my demands clearly, and I expect them to be fulfilled. The first step to fulfilling these demands is to halt the implementation of the [current] verdicts and reevaluate our file rejecting the accusation of acting against national security. I will therefore continue with my indefinite hunger strike."

Azimzadeh, who was arrested last November, is currently serving a six-year prison sentence for engaging in peaceful and legitimate trade union activities.

Azimzadeh this week protested his detention in Evin Prison while the mullahs' kangaroo court in Saveh, south-west of Tehran, considers his case. He has demanded that he be allowed to properly defend himself in the court.

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).

The following is the text of the statement by Jafar Azimzadeh:

My dear friend and resistant cellmate Ismail Abdi was released on three billion Rials bail (U.S. \$100,000). He had spent 11 months in prison without a judicial verdict and solely based on the will of the security apparatus. Abdi's release, while exciting and gratifying, does not mean that even a small step was being taken to realize our demands and the demands of millions of teachers and workers.

In our joint statement that was strongly and passionately supported by the country's teachers and workers unions as well as labor and teachers' organizations across the world, we demanded an end to treating social and civil protests as security issues and removing the charge of "associating and colluding with intent to act against national

security" from the open files of protesting workers and teachers and imprisoned union activists, including ourselves.

We protested wages below the poverty line, the ban on holding independent and free celebrations to mark International Workers' Day and Teachers' Day, the ban on forming independent trade unions, and lack of transparency and effective action by the International Labor Organization (ILO) against flagrant violation of the essential rights of Iranian workers and teachers, and we did go on hunger strike.

Accordingly, as far as it concerns Ismail Abdi's release through a heavy bail and an open case with heavy security charges, such an act from the legal authority dealing with his case even within the framework of existing law-breaking actions, was routine and, in Ismail's case, predictable.

For that reason, his release can't be used as a claim of addressing our demands and that of millions of workers and teachers, and it appears that it was intended to overshadow and limit the scope of the ever increasing (labor and teachers) movement that has centered around ending the treatment of protests by teachers and workers as security issues and protesting heavy security charges against trade activists around the country and around the globe.

Therefore, with great appreciation for the support of Iran's teachers and workers and labor and workers' unions and organizations around the world for our demands in the joint statement with Ismail Abdi, and emphasizing on realization of all of them, I will continue my indefinite hunger strike that I began on April 30.

Copy to: International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Jafar Azimzadeh - Ward 8 of Evin Prison
May 2016

What can we do?

Either contact the Iranian diplomatic mission (some address follow but please do a quick check that the address is correct) expressing concern about the condition of Jafar, or contact your local member of Parliament/Congress etc and ask them to make representations on Jafar's behalf. If you have any trade union links, it may be worth bringing his case to their attention.

Australia:

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
25 Culgoa Circuit OMalley
ACT 2606 Canberra
Email: ambassador@iranembassy.org.au

Austria

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Jaurèsgasse 9
Vienna
Austria
1030
Email:
public@iranembassy-wien.at

Denmark

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Engskiftevej 6
2100 Copenhagen

Germany

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Podbielskiallee 65/67,
14195 Berlin

Ireland

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
72 Mount Merrion Avenue
Blackrock
Dublin

Netherlands

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Duinweg 20
2585JX Den Haag

New Zealand

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
151 Te Anua Road,
Hataitai, Wellington

Pakistan

St.No.2, Sector G-5/1 Diplomatic Enclave,
Islamabad - Pakistan

Switzerland

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Thunstrasse 68
3006 Bern
Fax +41 (0)31 351 56 52

United Kingdom

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Princes Gate,
London SW7 1PT

United States of America (Iran and the USA do not have diplomatic relations)

Representative Office of Iran in Washington, United States

c/o Embassy of Pakistan
2209 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington
D.C. 20007
United States

Fax:

+1-202-965-1073

Email:

requests@daftar.org