



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

TO ALL EI MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Brussels, 7 July 2015

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URGENT ACTION APPEAL – IRAN

Release Iranian teacher union leader Esmail Abdi

Dear colleagues,

Education International (EI) urgently calls on its members to request the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to facilitate Mr Abdi's immediate release and to secure the right of Iranian teacher unionists to travel to attend union meetings. The arrest and detention of Esmail Abdi is an infringement of various international human right conventions, including those protecting the freedom of expression and association, as well as the right of education unions to be consulted on education policies.

Esmail Abdi, a leader of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association, was arrested following his attempt to obtain a visa to attend the 7th EI World Congress in Ottawa. Another Iranian teacher representative to the EI Congress, Mr Peyman Nodinian was confiscated his passport.

Education International (EI) invites your organisation and its members to take action now:

- Send an official protest letter to the President and to the Supreme Leader of Iran (please use the **attached model letter**).
- Contact your Government and the diplomatic representation of Iran in your country, requesting them to engage with the Iranian authorities.
- Individuals can petition the authorities through the **LabourStart appeal**
- Give high visibility to this urgent appeal by recommending it to your colleagues, union members and your networks; post it on your website, Facebook and Twitter.

Background

To prevent him from attending the EI World Congress and provide evidence of the harsh reality of teaching and learning in Iran, Tehran Teachers' Trade Association leader Esmail Abdi was first confiscated his passport and banned from crossing the border with Armenia. He was then ordered to return to Tehran to meet with prosecutors. When reporting to the prosecution office he was arrested while more than 70 teachers waited outside in support.

Mr Peyman Nodinian, another representative of the CCITTA who was to attend the EI World Congress will also be prevented from travelling. His passport was seized on 15 June 2015.

Abdi's arrest is the latest incident involving Iranian authorities' efforts to silence trade union activists. In addition to a 10 year suspended sentence handed down in response to his trade union work, reports also reveal that Abdi has been under pressure from the Intelligence Ministry to resign from his position with the ITTA.

Abdi's incarceration comes after nationwide rallies were held earlier this year to protest at the low wages that leave the majority of teachers below the poverty line.



Five other teacher unionists are languishing in the Iranian prisons: Ali Akbar Baghani, Rasould Bodaghi, Mahmoud Bagheri (all three board members of the Tehran Teachers Trade Association), Alireza Hashemi and Alireza Ghanbari.

The situation of field teacher activists and their family in Iran is considered very alarming by all the specialists that EI has reached within and outside Iran.

EI also called on the ILO, UNESCO and the UN General Secretary to take action. EI has approached the Iranian authorities and is in contact with the diplomatic authorities of Belgium and Canada.

EI will endeavour to keep you updated on all developments. EI will also inform CCITTA of all solidarity actions undertaken on their behalf.

EI thanks you for your solidarity in support of our Iranian colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary