



Council of  
Global Unions  
www.global-unions.org

## Global Unions condemn the escalating violations of human and labour rights and civil liberties in Iran

Statement by the Council of Global Unions (CGU), 12 September 2023

### Chair

Christy Hoffman,  
UNI Global Union

### Vice Chair

David Edwards,  
EI

### Acting Secretary

Luc Triangle,  
ITUC

The Council of Global Unions (CGU), representing over 200 million workers through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Global Union Federations (GUFs), and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), condemns the escalating violations of trade union leaders' and activists' human and labour rights and civil liberties by various Iranian authorities.

The CGU expresses deep concern about the intensification of repressive measures targeting teachers, journalists, trade union activists, student activists, and women's rights defenders, especially in light of the approaching anniversary of the extrajudicial death of Jina Mahsa Amini on 16 September. We denounce this repression and urgently call for its cessation, thereby enabling trade unionists to defend and uphold workers' rights in Iran, a cornerstone of any democratic society.

We are also concerned about the increasing influence of the Gasht-e-irshad ("morality police") and their enforcement of the mandatory hijab law to harass women and prevent their access to education.

Notably, affiliates of Education International (EI), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), namely the Coordinating Council of the Iranian Teacher Trade Associations, the Union of Workers of Tehran and Suburban Bus Company (Vahed Union) and the Association of Iranian Journalists (AoIJ), face relentless harassment, arrests, prolonged detentions, and torture in prison. Affiliated organisations, individual leaders and workers in the sectors of different global unions report similar violations, which include:

- Targeting and dismissal of teachers and trade union rights activists: the unjust targeting and dismissal of teachers and labor rights activists in Iran gravely imperil their livelihoods; conducting physical and psychological torture during detention, including publicly broadcasting forced "confessions"; imprisonment under arbitrary and indeterminate sentences, in horrendous conditions, and without access to medical care.
- Attacking workers' rallies and peaceful demonstrations, intimidating labour activists, journalists and protesting workers, doing arbitrary and summary dismissals, arresting trade union activists and prosecuting under charges such as "disrupting public order", "propaganda against the state", and "acting against national security" which can carry severe sentences, including capital punishment;



- Preventing the free circulation of news about union activities; sabotaging bona fide trade unions by setting up parallel regime-backed bodies and attacking on attempts by unions to hold public events, including those related to May Day;
- Violations of prisoners' rights: all detainees, including trade union activists, should be treated with the respect and dignity stipulated by international law. Illegally detained teachers, students, trade union activists, and human rights defenders must be released. Torture should be banned from all detention centres.
- Pressures on the families of union leaders: the escalating pressure on activists' families is a deeply distressing development. Families deserve to live in peace, free from the fear of reprisals.
- The right to organise and hold union meetings: Iranian trade unionists must be granted the fundamental right to organise and conduct general assemblies without the threat of persecution.
- Government's hostility to labour demands: The indifference to the legitimate demands of workers and retirees' demands is unfair. We stand in solidarity with all workers and retirees, who deserve equitable treatment and a dignified livelihood.

We call on the Iranian authorities to respect international labour standards, in particular freedom of association, and ensure that principles of human rights, justice, dignity and fairness prevail. The CGU expresses its particular solidarity to women's rights defenders in their struggle for a democratic and secular society.

We stand united in our commitment to defending the rights of workers, women, educators, journalists, rights' defenders and activists in Iran and around the world.