



Extrait du FIDH - Worldwide Human Rights Movement

<http://www.fidh.org/IRAN-Trade-unionist-Reza-Shahabi>

# **IRAN: Trade unionist Reza Shahabi sentenced to six years of prison**

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**FIDH - Worldwide Human Rights Movement**

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**Paris-Geneva, April 19, 2012. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), expresses its deepest concern about the sentencing of trade unionist Reza Shahabi to six-year imprisonment.**

On April 14, 2012, the lawyer of Mr. **Reza Shahabi**, Treasurer and board member of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed), was informed that his client had been sentenced to six years in prison by Judge Abolghassem Salavati of Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolution Court. Mr. Shahabi was convicted under charges of "propaganda against the regime" (one-year imprisonment) and "conspiracy against the national security" (five-year imprisonment). He was also banned from engaging in union activities for five years. Furthermore, he was condemned to a 70 million-rial fine (at the time of publication about 3,000 euros). While Mr. Shahabi has now 20 days to appeal, he remains detained in Evin prison.

Although Mr. Shahabi's state of health has been deteriorating in custody, prison authorities have not granted him appropriate medical treatment. In November, he was transferred to hospital due to pains in his back and neck, and doctors told him that some of the vertebra in his neck have degenerated and are in need of surgery followed by six months of complete rest, and that without hospitalisation his left side might be paralysed. On January 31, 2012, he was transferred to hospital for surgery, but was returned to prison later without an operation, because of the high risks. Apparently the doctors believe he must take complete rest for a few months to be ready for an operation. Beside his neck, his back is now also in bad conditions and he may need a disc operation as well. The damages to his spinal cord and back are believed to be caused by heavy beating in Evin prison's section 209 of Ministry of Intelligence after his arrest.

On April 14, Mr. Reza Shahabi started a dry hunger strike in protest to deteriorating conditions of his health and his prison sentence, demanding hospitalisation and abolition of the sentence. The Observatory recalls that Mr. Shahabi has been in pre-trial detention for over 22 months since his arrest on June 12, 2010 before being tried on February 28, 2012.

The Observatory further recalls that in Iran, the authorities continue to target independent trade unionists and subject them to judicial harassment and unfair prison sentences as an attempt to reduce the number of those who are prepared to defend workers' rights. At present, there are several independent unionists in prison, among them, Messrs. **Ali Nejati, Shahrokh Zamani, Mohammad Jarrahi, Sassan Vahebeivash, Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, Rassoul Bodaghi, Mohammad Hosseini, Mehdi Farahi Shandiz, Farzad Ahmadi, Mehrdad Amin-Vaziri, Pedram Nasrollahi** and **Ali Akhavan**.

On a positive note, the Observatory welcomes the release on April 18, 2012 of Mr. **Ebrahim Madadi**, Vice-President of Sherkat-e Vahed Workers Syndicate, after serving a three and a half-year imprisonment sentence, which was issued against him in December 2008.

*"Many trade unionists are subjected to an ongoing harassment, particularly at the judicial level, in Iran for defending human rights", said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President. "They are either arbitrarily detained or at risk of imminent arrest. These arbitrary prosecutions merely aim at silencing workers' rights defenders amid the current general crackdown on the Iranian civil society".*

*"The Observatory strongly denounces the sentencing of Mr. Shahabi and calls on the Iranian authorities to put an end to all acts of harassment against human rights defenders, to immediately and unconditionally release those presently detained in the country, to take all necessary measures to guarantee, in all circumstances, their physical*

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*and psychological integrity, and more generally to conform to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments ratified by Iran",* added Mr. Gerald Staberock, OMCT Secretary General.

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