

# URGENT ACTION



UANetwork Office AIUSA 600 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Washington DC 20003 T. 202.544.0200 F. 202.675.8566 E. [uan@aiusa.org](mailto:uan@aiusa.org) [amnestyusa.org/urgent/](http://amnestyusa.org/urgent/)

*Note: Please write on behalf of these persons even though you may not have received the original UA when issued on June 10, 2009. Thanks!*

19 June 2009

Further Information on UA 144/09 (10 June 2009) – Prisoners of conscience/fear of torture or ill-treatment

IRAN

Said Youzi (m), trade unionist  
Jafar Azim Zadeh (m), trade unionist

Released:

Gholamreza Khani (m), trade unionist  
Kaveh Mozzaffari (m), journalist  
Mehdi Farahandi Shandiz (m), trade unionist

---

Two trade unionists and a journalist arrested for attending a peaceful event marking International Workers' Day on 1 May were released on bail on the evening of 15 June. Gholamreza Khani and journalist Kaveh Mozzaffari were released on bail of 50 million toumans each (approximately US \$50,000), while Mehdi Farahandi Shandiz was released on bail of 100 million toumans (approximately US \$100,000). Jafar Azim Zadeh and Said Youzi, the other two trade unionists arrested for attending the same event, are still in prison and have been reportedly moved to a general section of Evin prison. It is not known whether they have been brought before a court.

Up to 2000 workers' rights activists and trade unionists, along with their families had gathered in Laleh Park, central Tehran, on 1 May to take part in a peaceful rally marking International Workers' Day. The 2009 May Day Organizing Committee' were denied permission to hold the rally and after participants started to gather, they were forcibly dispersed by security forces, which are said to have used tear-gas and baton charges in the course of their attempts to disperse or arrest participants. Smaller groups of workers, were reportedly isolated from the main gathering then kicked, punched and beaten. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has stated that at least 150 people were arrested at the event, many of whom were subsequently taken to Evin Prison. The majority of these people were released in the following days and weeks.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under Iranian labor legislation, workers are allowed to form Islamic Labor Councils (ILCs) in companies with more than 50 workers. The ILCs' objectives, under 2001 legislation, are mainly to "propagate and spread Islamic culture, and defend the achievements of the Islamic Revolution"; "set up Friday prayers; recite and pay tribute to religious slogans"; "establish meetings for sermons, religious discourse and lectures, on various occasions"; and "endeavor to enrich the times of rest for the workers and their families". Those permitted to stand for leadership positions in the ILCs are vetted and approved by an official selection body. Although the formation of independent trade union bodies remains prohibited in Iran and those who attempt to form such bodies risk detention and prosecution, a growing awareness of workers' rights has resulted in the creation of a number of independent unions and workers' support organizations. While some have been tolerated, members of others have faced arrest and other acts of repression.

---

*Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.*

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:**

- calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Jafar Azim Zadeh and Said Youzi for having taken part in peaceful events marking International Workers' Day, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association in connection with their support of workers' rights and trade unions;
- urging the authorities to ensure that workers detained on May Day are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to drop all charges against all of these individuals (Gholamreza Khani, Mehdi Farahandi Shandiz, Kaveh Mozzaffari, Jafar Azim Zadeh and Said Youzi) as they have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association in connection with their support of workers' rights and trade unions;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that trade unionists and workers' rights activists no longer face arrest for peacefully exercising their internationally recognized right to form and join trade unions and that peaceful gatherings of workers' rights activists are permitted to take place.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Head of the Judiciary**

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)  
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri,  
Tehran 1316814737, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Email:** shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir  
(In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Minister of Labor and Social Affairs**

Mohammad Jahromi  
Ministry of Labour, Azadi Avenue  
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Email:** pasokhgoo@irimlsa.ir OR support@irimlsa.ir  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**Leader of the Islamic Republic**

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid Keshvar Doust Street,  
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Email:** info\_leader@leader.ir  
via website:  
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English) OR  
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter> (Persian)  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

**President**

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad  
The Presidency  
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection,  
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Fax:** 011 98 21 6 649 5880  
**Email:** via website:  
<http://www.president.ir/email/>

Iran does not presently have an embassy in the United States. Instead, please send copies to:

Iranian Interests Section  
Embassy of Pakistan  
2209 Wisconsin Ave NW  
Washington DC 20007  
**Fax:** 1 202 965 1073  
**Email:** requests@daftar.org

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**

**Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 31 July 2009.**