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# What sort of solidarity do workers in Iran need?

## Why we cannot politically support the day of action on March 6

Supporters of Hands Off the People of Iran will be taking part in the day of action on March 6 to highlight the plight of Iranian trade unionists currently languishing in the prisons of the regime (Ossanlou, Salehi and many others). However, we draw the line at politically endorsing these protests.

The groups centrally involved in organising this mobilisation (the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)) are deeply compromised politically. They are more or less silent on the role of imperialism in the region and - in truth - are junior partners in implementing the reactionary agendas of the US and its allies.

The official leaflets to mobilise for this day of action focus almost exclusively on opposition to the theocratic regime. But the Iranian working class is facing *two* enemies - both the Ahmadinejad regime and the *biggest* enemy of it and the world's working class, imperialism.

The negative impact that the pressure of US-led imperialism has already exerted on the Iranian working class does not merit a mention in the publicity material of the ITF and ITUC. The looming threat of war and sanctions have cost the jobs of thousands of Iranian workers - and those that protest to defend their conditions against the anti-democratic attacks of the theocratic regime are branded as "traitors" or "dupes of imperialism". Iranian workers are struggling daily against the Islamic Republic's attacks - privatisations, casualisations, systematic non-payment of wages and attacks on effectively organised trade unions that stand up to this vicious exploitation.

Yet, in this, the theocracy is just enthusiastically enforcing neo-liberal economic policies dictated by the World Bank and the IMF! No wonder there is no enthusiasm amongst the working class and radical movements of Iran for regime change

'George Bush style'. Not only do they have the grinding experience of what this already means for their daily struggle to live, they have only to glance at the nearby hell that imperialism has fashioned in Iraq to understand that the chance for genuine democracy and social change must come from their *own* struggles, not from reactionary self-appointed 'saviours'. Organisations such as IFT or ITUC that are silent on imperialism - and those on the left that uncritically tail them - effectively provide a left cover for the war plans of Bush.

Hopi has a totally different approach to solidarity. We are clear moribund capitalism - imperialism - has no answers either for the people of Iran or anywhere else on the globe. We want direct links of support between the working class in Iran and internationally that are ideologically, politically and materially *totally independent of either imperialism or the theocratic regime*. In today's world, democracy and progressive social change comes from struggles only from below - whether in the Middle East, in Europe or in the United States itself.

Below is the motion on workers in Iran passed at the Hopi launch conference plus our model trade union resolution.



# Hopi trade union model resolution

This Conference/Branch/AGM/Regional Council/Trades Council notes the continuing threat of war against Iran. We are opposed to any imperialist intervention, sanctions or war on Iran. The death and destruction in Iraq today is an example of kind of 'democracy' imperialism brings. Real democracy can only be won from below. That is why we support the Iranian people in their struggle against the theocratic regime. This regime is repressing its own people, with trade unionists, students and women's rights activists imprisoned and tortured.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of workers arrested for their trade union or political activities, including Mahmoud Salehi, Mansour Ossanlou, Ebrahim Madadi and Mohsen Hakimi. We resolve to establish practical links with the working class and progressive movement in Iran, and to provide whatever solidarity we can.

We resolve to affiliate to Hands off the People of Iran (Hopi) and play an active role in the campaign to prevent an attack on Iran. Hopi is in active solidarity with the rank and file of Iranian workers and supports their struggle for independent workers' organisations. Hopi also supports the Workers Fund Iran, a charity which - amongst other things - supports the Iranian workers who have not been paid their wages for many months. We resolve to publicise struggles taking place in Iran and to make available our resources and mailing lists for promotion of the campaign.

We resolve to affiliate to HOPI (TU Branches/Trade Union Councils £25, Regional bodies £50, national £100) . We resolve to donate [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] to Hopi. We resolve to set up a standing order for [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] to help the campaign.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ On behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our campaign demands:

- **No to imperialist war! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US/UK troops from Iraq and all the Gulf region!**
- **No to any imperialist intervention. The immediate and unconditional end to sanctions on Iran!**
- **No to the theocratic regime!**
- **Opposition to Israeli expansionism and aggression!**
- **Support to all working class and progressive struggles in Iran against poverty and repression!**
- **Support for socialism, democracy and workers' control in Iran!**
- **For a nuclear-free Middle East as a step towards a nuclear-free world!**

If you oppose the war plans of the imperialists - but support the struggle for an Iran free of the oppressive clerical regime - join us! Individuals: £10 or £5 unwaged (organisations see website).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/union \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to address above

Supporters include:

- **Diane Abbott** Labour MP
- **John McDonnell** Labour MP
- **Peter Tatchell** OutRage
- **Caroline Lucas** Green Party MEP
- **Tommy Sheridan** Solidarity
- **Ken Loach** filmmaker
- **John Pilger** journalist
- **Naomi Klein** writer and activist
- **Dr Hilary Rose** scientist
- **Haifa Zangana** writer
- Cllr **Rania Khan** Respect
- Cllr **Lufta Begum** Respect
- Iranian Workers Bulletin
- Workers Left Unity - Iran
- Communist Party of Great Britain
- Green Party
- Organization of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar)
- Communist Students