

Vancouver & District Labour Council



July 16, 2019

Hassan Rouhani
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Palestine Avenue, Pasteur St., Pasteur Sq.
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Via e-mail: media@rouhani.ir

Dear President Rouhani:

Subject: Flogging and Imprisonment of Teachers

I write today on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC), a federation of trade unions representing 60,000 workers in our region of Canada.

We have recently become aware of the plight of Hamid Rahamati, a member of the Teachers' Association of Iran who was arrested on December 29, 2018. His arrest was in relation to his participation in a sit-in and hunger strike in front of the office of the Ministry of Education in Shareza, Fars province.

Mr. Rahamati was protesting the arrest and imprisonment of fellow teachers, including Esmael Abdi and Mahmood Beheshti. In November of last year, I wrote regarding the arrests of teachers as well as truck drivers occurring at that time.

On January 1, 2019, Mr. Rahamati was released on bail, but was then charged as a threat to security and sentenced, by Branch 103 of Criminal Court of Islamic Republic in Shahreza, to three years prison, 74 lashes, and \$600 fine. He will spend ten months of his sentence in the Shahreza prison in Isfahan province, where we will be lashed in the courtyard in the presence of his fellow prisoners and a supervising judge. It goes without saying that this treatment is inhumane, barbaric, and shameful. It has sparked outrage amongst teachers and people of good conscience in Iran, leading to several strikes and protests. It is also facing condemnation around the globe.

It should also be remembered that Hamid Rahmati is not the first teacher in Iran to have faced this type of sentence. Previously Mohamad Habibi was sentenced to 74 lashes and 7.5 years in prison. We also wrote with regards to heinous treatment of Mr. Habibi.

We join with all of those who are calling for an end to the repression of labour activists in Iran, including a ban on flogging, the closure of security cases against activists, and the immediate and unconditional release of all jailed labour activists. We are aware that the oppression faced by workers in Iran is gaining increasing international notoriety and has led to a campaign for Iran to be expelled from the International Labour Organization. Your intervention can help to begin to improve this reputation.

Yours truly,

Stephen von Sychowski
President