

His Excellency Mr Hamid Baeidinejad
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Prince's Gate
London SW7 1PT

By email to: iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir

27 September 2017

Dear Ambassador

Reza Shahabi - imprisoned trade union leader

The Trades Union Congress, representing working people in Great Britain, on behalf of our five and a half million union members, urges you to convey to your government our call for the immediate and unconditional release of Reza Shahabi, a trade union leader and prisoner of conscience who has been detained in Iran solely for the peaceful exercise of his human and trade union rights.

Reza Shahabi is the treasurer and board member of the Syndicate of the Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, a trade union for workers employed by the United Bus Company of Tehran (Sherkat-e Vahed). First arrested in June 2011, he served the next four years in prison, subjected to torture and ill-treatment including the deliberate denial of adequate medical treatment. Despite being released for medical treatment, he was returned to Raja'i Shahr prison in August, and on 9 August joined a hunger strike by other prisoners protesting at degrading and inhumane treatment.

Reza's only crime has been to be a leader of a trade union, standing up for the rights of his colleagues at work, and to protest against the appalling treatment he and others have received in prison. In persecuting and imprisoning him in this way, your government is abrogating its obligations to freedom of association, allowing people to form and operate unions of their choice. As a member of the International Labour Organisation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is duty bound to uphold freedom of association, and similar obligations result from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which Iran has ratified.

Please convey to your government our call for Reza Shahabi to be released immediately and unconditionally, as well as provided with access to the specialised medical care that he needs. I would be grateful for your early response confirming that this has been done, and indicating the response of your government.

I am copying this to the International Trade Union Confederation to which the TUC is affiliated, to the International Transport Workers' Federation to which the Syndicate of the Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company is affiliated, to Amnesty International which has declared Reza Shahabi a prisoner of conscience, and to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Owen Tudor, Head of EU and International Relations at the TUC on +44 20 7467 1325 or otudor@tuc.org.uk

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY

General Secretary