

# TOGETHER

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PAUL HOWES National Secretary



22 June 2009

The Hon. Stephen Smith MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via facsimile: (02) 6273 4112

Dear Minister,

The world is transfixed at the moment by the protest scenes in the streets of Tehran, and other Iranian cities. Ordinary citizens are demanding that their votes be taken seriously, and counted properly, not subverted by the current fundamentalist ruling elite.

This week however there will be new demonstrations outside Iranian embassies across the globe. These protests will focus on the rights of working people in Iran.

The AWU is writing to urge you raise the troubling situation of labour rights repression in Iran with both your counterparts in the democratic world – and the diplomatic representatives of Iran in this country.

I am aware that your US counterpart, the Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, has received similar requests from my counterpart unions in the USA.

On June 26 union members, in co-ordinated actions across the globe, will be demanding that imprisoned Iranian union leaders be released, and workers' rights to independent, democratic trade unions and collective bargaining be recognised in that country.

Iranian unionists from our sister union the Food Workers' Union and the Haft Tapeh Sugar Workers' Union are currently in jail. Mr Ebrahim Madadi and Mr Farzad Kamangar are currently imprisoned, with five more sugar workers leaders recently given one year jail sentences.

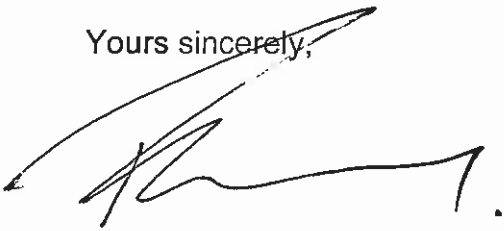
Mr Mansour Osanloo, the President of the Tehran Bus Workers' Union, who has been characterised as the Lech Walesa of Iran, has spent more years in the Evan Prison – a well known hated centre of torture in Tehran - than he has been in freedom since he formed the union in 1995.

Their only crime has been to demand their democratic right to form a trade union and campaign for respect and dignity in their workplaces.

Defending the rights of these workers is part of the protest struggle for freedom, democracy and economic development in Iran which we have been witnessing since the so-called Presidential elections in that country.

I hope that you can support these workers and their union by raising this issue in all appropriate forums.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Paul Howes', written over a diagonal line that extends from the top left towards the center.

Paul Howes  
**NATIONAL SECRETARY**

cc: Sharan Burrow, President ACTU