



Published by: Felezkâr-Mechanic

September 2014

Union Messenger

Monthly Bulletin of Iran's Trade Unions

Internet:

www.felezkar.com

<http://vahedsyndica.com/>

International email:

irunionmessenger@gmail.com

Facebook :

www.facebook.com/Metalworkers

Vol. 1 Issue 4

EDITORIAL

Greetings to the workers and labour activists and trade unions on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the publication of Payam Sandika (Message of Union)

Dear fellow workers,

The 32nd No. of Payam Sandika (in Farsi) is now published on its 4th anniversary. We deem our relentless effort to reflect the labour developments and introduce our readers to the ideas and thoughts of labour activists and raising the workers' awareness, as our duty, and we have made and will continue to make our best effort to make this happen. Over the past 4 years, many of our friends lent us a hand and many helped us by delivering Payam Sandika to working households. We have had friends who helped us improve Payam Sandika through their guidance and advice, so that this monthly bulletin would rightly suit the name and personality of Iran's workers. Although our Payam still suffers from shortages, but with your aid and support, we are trying to make each Payam better than the previous one.

We extend our gratitude to all those who have helped and worked with us from day one. The poem we had in the very first No. of Payam reflected our outlook and our humanist objectives and labour ideals. We dedicate that poem [about life and love and striving for a better world] to all the workers and working people and all the friends of the Iran's labour movement.

Let's bring awareness to workers' households and factories by distributing Payam Sandika ever broader!

September 2014

THE WORKERS AT HAFT-TAPPEH SUGARCANE COMPLEX ARE

ON STRIKE!



The workers of Haft-Tappeh Sugarcane complex went on a strike at this production plant in reaction to the indecent "job classification" developed against the labour law. The "Job classification" was overdue at this complex for 20 years and was one of the demands of the workers. Unfortunately, the previous CEO, Mr. Kazemayni who used to show up at the plant only once a week and had not taken any positive step towards the proper management of this complex to move it out of crisis and improve the production situation, took an anti-worker measure and signed under the newly formulated job classification, and after getting it ratified by the Labour Office in the city of Shoosh [the jurisdiction overseeing Haft-Tappeh complex], quit his job and left the plant. We don't know if the new CEO is aware of this situation or not.

The Islamic Labour Council which is assembled fraudulently and all of its members hold office or management positions are in favor of this job classification because they all get a high raise in pay. Meanwhile, the workers are getting just a very small raise (1/10th to 1/5th of the Council members). One of the masterworks of the developers of the job classification was to demote many of the workers from 12th rank down to the 10th rank so that they get a less pay increase...

Union Messenger

Bulletin of Iran's Trade Unions

September 2014

Vol. 1 Issue 4

They also classified some workers under a different position; e.g. listed a welding foreman as a landscape worker... Such classification was done with the cooperation of the previous CEO, the Islamic Labour Council and the Labour Office of Shoosh to trample the rights of the workers and manipulate their wages. In this classification, which also violates the Labour Law, the only criterion has been the level of education; the number of years of experience and service has been discounted.

It is not just due to the job classification that office workers and supervisory/management positions get the highest wages and benefits. Whenever the workers qualify for a benefit, office workers take a share too and at the year end, receive the same bonus. But if the government gives any benefits or bonuses to the office workers, the workers are left out.

The workers at the Haft-Tappeh complex reject such classification and demand a job classification in accordance to the Labour Law. We will keep you posted on future developments.

The public relations office of the Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran

October 1st, 2014

HAFT-TAPPEH STRIKE UPDATE 1:

HAFT-TAPPEH STRIKE CONTINUES

UNTIL WORKERS' DEMANDS ARE MET

After the strike on October 1st and the management promise to revisit and review the job classification developed previously, the workers returned to work but went on the so-called Italian strike, i.e. refused to do any extra work. Unfortunately some media outlets... had reported this as the end of the strike.

In the existing job classification, even the Labour Law was ignored and the president of the Islamic Labour Council was given higher wages and more benefits, beyond and above the law provisions. And the same was done for office workers and

those with higher, university education. The workers objected to this arrangement. In the Islamic Labour Council, that must be a labour organization, such individuals are in charge that are government employees and should not be candidates or members of the board of this council... Therefore, the workers of Haft-Tappeh sugarcane complex do not recognize this council and its members as a legitimate labour council. In this job classification a pay hike of 900 Tooman [about 30 cents] to 4,200 Tooman is considered for workers, whereas the office workers with higher education get a raise from 5,000 to 10,700 Tooman. The president of the Islamic Council got a raise of 10,700 for himself. In fear of facing the workers, since the protests started he has gone on vacation until further notice.

The new management of the complex is not able and does not intend to meet the workers' demands. Therefore, negotiations with the workers' representatives did not yield any plausible results because the new CEO hinted that the same job classification that was implemented at Karoon Industrial Agricultural Complex be implemented at Haft-Tappeh, which was also rejected by the workers and the strike has now extended to rallies in front of the administration office of the complex.

The public relations office of the Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran

October 4th, 2014

HAFT-TAPPEH STRIKE UPDATE 2:

Hundreds of daily-paid workers of Haft-Tappeh Sugarcane Complex have held the entrance gate of the plant shut and don't allow anyone to get in or out. The strike is in protest to unpaid wages of workers since last December. Also, the workers in the rest of the complex are still on strike.

The public relations office of the Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran

October 6th, 2014

AGHAJARI IN INTERVIEW WITH ILNA:

LAYING OFF WORKERS OF WITH THE OLD EXCUSE OF SANCTIONS

Laying off the workers at the South Pars region because of shortage or lack of material is an ongoing practice in the region, one of whose victims are the workers in each of the phases of this oil and gas project.



Mr. Aghajari said: "The material includes tanks, motors, pumps, compressors... that are used in building refineries." He added: "Due to the continuation of sanctions, the supply of such materials in the region has been facing with difficulty for years." Referring to tier one and other lower tier contract companies at Assalooyeh which are facing a shortage and depleting of material, Mr. Aghajari then added: "These employers lay off the workers with this excuse, and if a worker objects to it, they justify the layoffs with the firm excuse of sanctions." Emphasizing that the job security of workers shouldn't be threatened for this reason, he then told ILNA: "Each one of these contactors has various projects in other phases of Assalooyeh and can transfer the workers to those other projects, but they don't do this."

HOW ARE THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF IMF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COUNTRY?

By: *Reza Karshenasan*

Hassan Hefdah-tan, Labour Minister (Rabiei) deputy of labour relations, in an interview with Mehr news agency said: "Last [Iranian] year, 90% of labour contracts were temporary contracts." Later, the Minister told Mehr: "we revisited and revised workplace inspections and outsourced some of them." Then the parliament allowed the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade to hire 3,500 inspectors on a temporary contract basis in the field of audit. That is how the ministers of the government of "hope and prudence", with the support from the parliament, turn the employees and workers' jobs from permanent to temporary. The result is that one of the members of the Islamic Labour Council of Behesht Zahara Cemetery speaks of the possibility of "adjusting" 150 workers in this organization, and its Human Resources manager says: "Permanent full time employment has been discontinued some time ago and the organization's workforce is being



transferred [outsourced] to contract companies." The IMF has been advising the governments for years that the best way to confront the labour struggles is to threaten their job security, which we are seeing its examples now. In his election speech last year, Mr. Rouhani highlighted the 40% inflation rate and the 25% increase in wages of

workers and said: "if I am elected as the President, I will increase the wages to match the inflation as required by the law." Just before his election, he once again said: "Article 41 of the Labour Law clearly states that the minimum wage of workers must be determined in line with the inflation announced by the Central Bank, such that the livelihood of a family of four can be secured." But how is that all of those promises have been forgotten after a few months? Isn't it that the IMF did not allow the wage increase? The workers filed a complaint with the Administrative Justice Court and Article 90 Committee of the parliament about the insignificant increase of wages. Mehr news agency quoted Mr. Montazeri: "The workers' complaint won't go too far. They have to complain to God, maybe they get somewhere." This shows the extent of autocratic treatment of the working class by the officials and aligning with the IMF prescriptions.

METALWORKER REPORTS:

WHEN STATE-APPOINTED MANAGERS BECOME BROKERS

Corruption and brokerage has become a normal trend among the state-appointed managers. These managers who are worried neither about the homeland nor bad publicity, think only about pocketing more money during their term. The metalworker unveils this situation in Ilam Cement Plant:

The product resale of Ilam Cement Plant in Khuzestan province was run by 7 sales offices in this province for about 6 years. They were granted a 10% discount in the price. Some time ago, Mr. Farokhnejad- the resident manager and sole power of the main office in Ilam- and Mr. Madanpish- the proprietor of Tehran office of the plant, has been trying to give a hard time to and frustrate the sales agents of the plant in Khuzestan using various excuses. One day they eliminated the 10% discount of the sales offices,

and another time refused to ship products to these 7 offices. Until now, that is 7 months into the new [Iranian] year, the contracts and owed payments of these sales offices have been unilaterally cancelled and held back by the two aforesaid people. Now by taking bribe, these two have appointed someone else (by the name of Faizi) as the sole sales agent in Khuzestan, and have given him a 13% price discount, and through under the table deals with Faizi have pocketed large sums of money. These managers who are well known as dealer and brokers in the company have told those 7 sales agents in Khuzestan that they make a living by disturbing the living of others.

There is no doubt that with such dealings of the managers, soon the cement plant will go bankrupt and these guys will take their colossal wealth and have fun somewhere in Europe, and laugh at others. This is a small example of how the broker managers pocket money in Iran.

BEHNAM EBRAHIMZADEH'S LIFE IS AT RISK. LET'S HELP AND SAVE HIM!

Behnam Ebrahimzadeh is a factory worker in Tehran who is now in jail for seeking justice. His



son Neema is suffering from a life threatening illness. In recent days worrying news about the physical health of Ebrahimzadeh has been reported. He has been on hunger strike in protest to the illegal conditions imposed on him. According to his wife, he is in a

critical condition. She asked all the union workers

Union Messenger

Bulletin of Iran's Trade Unions

September 2014

Vol. 1 Issue 4

to help him. In her letter she wrote: "I ask you to put more pressure on the judicial system [of Iran] so that Behnam, my husband and the father of my ailing son, is freed. We thank you in advance for your actions all across the world."

Dear union sisters and brothers, international unions,

While the workers at Bafgh Iron Ore Mine are on strike and a few of their representatives are arrested and jailed, and other representatives among the striking workers are at risk of arrest and detention, not only Behnam Ebrahimzadeh's rights are violated, but he has resorted to the last option in his fight, i.e. going on hunger strike, in order to defend his human rights.

The Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics appeals to you friends to make every possible effort to improve the situation of Behnam Ebrahimzadeh.

The Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran

August 23rd, 2014

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Letter of General Secretary of the NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS of Britain to President of Iran

Dear Mr President

The National Union of Teachers, on behalf of its over 300,000 members, is appalled at the brutal and inhumane treatment suffered by trade union activist **BEHNAM EBRAHIMZADEH**, a member of the Committee to Pursue the Establishment of Workers' Organizations and a Children's Rights advocate, who has been detained in Evin Prison since June 2010.

Behnam has been subjected to torture, solitary

confinement, and cruel and inhuman treatment. His circumstances have been worsened by an increase in the number of charges brought against him in order to ensure that he remains in prison for the 'crime' of exercising his right to assemble workers and campaign for trade union rights in Iran.

The National Union of Teachers is extremely concerned for the welfare and safety of Behnam, who is currently on hunger strike in protest of the new charges brought against him for causing unrest in prison. I have been told on good authority that Behnam has been threatened by the prison authorities that if he does not end his hunger strike, he will be transferred to solitary confinement.

We therefore urge you to respect workers' and human rights, and call for clemency for Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, whose health is rapidly deteriorating. The reputation of your country will be dealt another blow by the continued attacks on the trade union movement. The fate of Behnam and others is in your hands.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Blower

General Secretary

17 September 2014

A similar letter was sent to the President of Iran by the General Secretary of UNISON (Britain).



Other contact emails:

s_felezkar@yahoo.com

sfelezkar1961@gmail.com

vsyndica@gmail.com