

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/123/2007

23 October 2007

**Further Information on UA 08/06 (MDE 13/002/2006, 9 January 2006) and follow-ups (MDE 13/11/2007, 16 October 2007), (MDE 13/086/2007, 13 July 2007), (MDE 13/011/2007, 31 January 2007), (MDE 13/129/2006, 29 November 2006) and (MDE 13/094/2006, 17 August 2006) - Arbitrary arrest / prisoner of conscience / medical concern**

**IRAN                    Mansour Ossanlu, (m), aged 47, Head of the Union of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company**

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In the evening of Saturday 20 October Mansour Ossanlu underwent an urgently needed eye operation at Tehran's Shahid Doktor Labafinejad Hospital, possibly to save his sight. The results of the operation will be known in around one week and his immediate family have been given permission to visit him. He is expected to return to prison following a short period of recuperation.

Mansour Ossanlu had reportedly been involved in a dispute with prison officials while imprisoned between December 2005 to August 2006, during which his head was struck. It appeared to result in damage to the retina of both of his eyes. He developed cataracts in his right eye, for which he received medical treatment and he was scheduled to have medical treatment on his left eye in June-July 2007, which had been denied and was at risk of losing his sight in this eye.

When a delegation of visiting Indonesian trade unionists, and later his wife, tried to visit Mansour Ossanlu at Evin prison on 9 October, the prison authorities claimed that he had been taken to hospital for urgent medical treatment for injuries he had sustained at the hands of the security forces in May 2005. His wife was eventually able to see him on 15 October, when he told her he had received no medical treatment at all.

Prisoner of conscience Mansour Ossanlu, leader of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (Sherkat-e Vahed), was arrested on 10 July 2007 following a trip to Europe. He was previously detained for eight months, from December 2005 to August 2006, and again for a month from November to December 2006 in connection with his trade union activities. He had reportedly been sentenced to five years' imprisonment in May 2007, but was believed to be free on bail at the time of his arrest.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Independent trade unions are not permitted in Iran, and discriminatory legislation means that certain categories of people are not permitted to stand for election as workers' representatives of government-recognised unions; government supervisory bodies select who can stand for union posts, and all public sector jobs. Trades unions in Iran are represented by a body known as Workers House, whose leaders are also subject to selection criteria imposed by the state, weakening its ability to effectively represent workers' concerns. The Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, which resumed activities in 2004 after a 25-year ban, is still not legally recognised.

Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 22 (1) of which states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Article 26 of Iran's Constitution states: "The formation of parties, societies, political or professional associations...is permitted provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, the criteria of Islam, or the basis of the Islamic republic. No one may be prevented from participating in the aforementioned groups, or be compelled to participate in them." Similar guarantees are provided under International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions.

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), to which Sherkat-e Vahed is affiliated, has lead a global campaign to get medical care and to free Mansour Ossanlu (see: <http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/freeosanloo.cfm>). Images from its global 'badge action' ca be viewed at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/itf/sets/72157602429966468/> ) The appeal page established by AIUSA can be viewed at: [http://www.amnestyusa.org/By\\_Country/Iran/page.do?id=1011172&n1=3&n2=30&n3=922](http://www.amnestyusa.org/By_Country/Iran/page.do?id=1011172&n1=3&n2=30&n3=922)) while The UK section's online appeal succeeded in generating over 10,000 appeals between the evening of 17 October to the morning of 22 October (see: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10989>). A video entitled *Freedom Will Come - the Story of Mansour Osanloo* can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in-vF2LvITk>

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, English, French, Arabic or your own language:**

- welcoming reports that Mansour Ossanlu has received urgent treatment by an eye specialist;
- urging that he be allowed to remain in hospital in line with recommendations of the relevant specialists;
- expressing concern that he continues to be held solely on account of his peaceful trade union activities, and that he should be released immediately and unconditionally and all charges dropped;
- urging the authorities to review the sentence passed against him in May 2007 with a view to dropping charges relating to his peaceful trade union and human rights work;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations under ICCPR Article 22 (1) and ILO conventions 87 and 98, which provide for the right to form and join trade unions.

**APPEALS TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** info@leader.ir

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

**Email:** info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

Alireza Mahjoub, Director, Workers House

Enghlab Street - Daneshgah Street

Ravan-e Mehr Crossroads, Tehran, Iran

**Salutation:** Dear Sir

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 December 2007.