



March 13, 2007

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
President, Islamic Republic of Iran
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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
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Dear President Ahmadinejad:

On behalf of the nearly 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I am writing to bring to your attention our serious concern over developments within the Iranian education sector. We have closely followed recent reports in the international media concerning the arrest and detention at an undisclosed location of two senior officials of the Teachers' Trade Association on March 7th, and the additional arrest of a further 20 education leaders.

Those arrested have been involved in peaceful protests for decent living wages and improved classroom conditions for teachers. Several times within the past months, thousands of teachers have courageously rallied in public asking that their voices be heard. Their grievance centers on a long-promised, but yet to be enacted government reform granting teachers pay equal to many other civil servants.

We urge you, Mr. President, to:

- investigate the circumstances and secure the immediate and unconditional release of any educator detained while exercising the right to peacefully protest;
- require the Ministry of Education to open serious negotiations with teachers and other education workers so that their long-standing needs for a living wage and respectable working conditions may be met; and
- assure in the future that all Iranian educators may exercise the freedoms of association and assembly, without fear of discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

Iran, as a member of the International Labour Organization for more than 50 years, has an obligation arising from its membership to adhere to the ILO's "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work." We strongly ask the Iranian government to now do its part, to its fullest ability, in respecting these principles and ensuring these rights.

Sincerely,

Edward J. McElroy
President

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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cc: Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary, Education International
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Dr. Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State
Golam-Ali Haddad-Adel, Leader of the Iranian Parliament
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