

# **Mahmoud Salehi, Reza Shahabi, Keyvan Mohtadi and Hassan Saeedi struggle in Kurdistan**

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"Mahmoud Salehi", a Kurdish labor activist, is 1 of leaders of Iranian labor movement and 1 of world renowned activists in this field. His labor activities started after revolution of February 1978 and resumed after inflammatory atmosphere of early years after revolution subsided, and it continues until now.

So far, he has been arrested 19 times under various charges and titles, and as Mahmoud Salehi says, he has been in prison for a total of 8 years of his life, 3 of which were illegal.

This labor activist suffered from severe frostbite during his illegal detention in 1998 in solitary cells of Saqqez intelligence and because of hunger strike in protest against this illegal action, his kidneys were seriously damaged and sometime after that, his kidneys bled and he was put on dialysis took medicine. But after being arrested again on 27. 4. 2015, despite repeated warnings to interrogators and investigator of case regarding deterioration of his kidneys, his medication was stopped and he lost both his kidneys that same night. From then until now, he undergoes haemodialysis 2 days a week for 4 hours each time.

About history of labor organizations in Kurdistan before and after 1978 revolution growth of class consciousness of workers and effort to expand independent labor institutions in Kurdistan.

When did formation of labor organizations in Kurdistan date back? In other words, before and after revolution of 1978, which labor institutions were active or were established in Kurdistan?

First, it is necessary to mention that my current understanding of creation of unions or labor activity, in terms of experience and knowledge, is completely different from era and early years of 1978 revolution. Although he was about 15 years old before revolution, experience of creating labor organizations in most cities of Kurdistan, except Sanandaj, was almost new and very new. If there is a claim about existence of labor organizations before revolution among some labor activists, it is mostly based on oral narratives and references to history of struggle and activity of some old labor activists, not a reference to a document or a recognized and recognized organization. However, during revolution and its expansion in country, including Kurdistan, 1<sup>st</sup> labor union was established in Saqqez, that is, in middle of February, when Savak administration of saqqez city was seized by revolutionaries, "Baker Workers' Union" was formed in 1 of halls of this building.

On other hand, "Khabaz Sanandaj Workers' Union" officially started its activity in 1963 and was active until 2020, but for some reasons. Unfortunately, it stopped working. Even during revolution, this union often had 2 to 3 thousand members. Unions and syndicates existed in this city in other sectors and divisions, but establishment of these labor organizations in other cities of Kurdistan was established after revolution.

In 1978 and 1979, organizations such as "Sanandaj Worker's House", "Labor Councils of Sanandaj Factories and Labor Centers", which included "Seasonal Project Workers' Union", "Khabaz Workers' Union", "Baneh Unemployed Workers'

Union", "Khabaz Saqqez Workers' Union", "Bukan Workers' Union", "Naghadeh Workers' Union", "Sardasht Unemployed Workers' Union", "Piranshahr Workers' House", "Ashnoye Workers' House", "Nelous Workers' Union" (in Nelos village of Ashnoye), "Komele labor committee in Ashnoye", were formed. What is your opinion regarding establishment of these labor institutions after 1978 revolution?

Apart from Sanandaj labor organizations, I do not consider other institutions to be cited. We went to Mahabad after revolution and also after formation of Saqqez Baker Workers Union to expand our activities, which were affected by party activities, but there was no news of labor organizations in this city and its surroundings. In Mahabad, despite a lot of effort, we did not succeed in creating even 1 labor organization.

However, experiences after revolution provided conditions for labor activists to separate their activities from opposition parties and as a class, create their own independent labor organization, put forward their demands, and make their activities public and legal started.

After enduring imprisonment and being released from prison on 11. 2. 1988, in addition to finding a job, I tried to prepare for establishment of a labor organization. My political background and enduring imprisonment in late 1980 was an obstacle to direct action because many workers did not have much desire to cooperate with a former political prisoner, but after several years of continuous conversations with a number of friends and colleagues and gaining their consent, When in 1993 first general assembly was held to form "Union Association of Khabazi Workers of Saqqez and Suburbs" in "Hazrat Omar Mosque" Saqqez, I encouraged everyone to become a member of this labor organization. I was not initiator of creation of this

general assembly and I participated in this assembly only as a bakery worker. But founders of this assembly were "Mohammed Abdipour", "Ata Salimi", "Syed Jalal Hosseini" and "Mohammadtal Fatalizadeh". These people, as founding board, had requested "Social Affairs" department, Saqqez, to establish Khabaz Workers' Association.

But after I defended workers in front of conciliatory statements of head of labor department, atmosphere became tense and vast majority of workers stood up in my defense, and this unanimity and unity of workers and their threat to leave meeting effectively made me representative of workers imposed on founding board of association; Without filing and confirming qualification and with highest number of votes.

It should be mentioned that from 1995 to 1997, trade unions of workers of Baneh, Mariwan, Bukan and Mahabad factories were formed, and in addition to cooperating with their leaders and activists, we played a prominent role in formation of these unions.

Where did story of trade union end and what happened to it?

Government and security apparatus that monitored and monitored activities of trade union and knew effective activists of this labor organization systematically started project of weakening, splitting and disintegrating trade union since 2000 and until 30. 4. 2020 when trade union ceased to operate forever. It continued with full force and intensity. It should be noted that pressures included a wide range from repeated imprisonment and detention of main activists and instilling fear and panic among workers to announcement of "Islamic Republic Workers House", propaganda attack, promotion of rumors and tagging and accusation of membership in opposition parties.

In order to crush and deal with trade union, government authorities declared worker's house in 2002. Khaneh Kargar, which only had a branch in Sanandaj, as a government and institutional project parallel to independent labor organizations, decided to open a branch in Saqqez - Dair city and start work of splitting and creating divisions with board members of trade association.

First of all, they came to me for cooperation, and after a long conversation, in addition to request to open a branch in Saqqez, they proposed to be head of worker's home in west of country. I rejected their offer with argument that I cannot fight in an institution that is government controlled. Next option was Atta Salimi, head of trade union at that time. Mr. Salimi accepted their proposal and took some members of trade union with him, and practically trade union was split into 2.

But it didn't take long that financial corruption of many members of Labor House made this government institution grounded and discredited forever, and many of its members tore up their membership cards.

When did relations between Kurdish labor activists and labor activists outside Kurdistan begin and to what extent was it organized?

Until 2004, our relationship with workers and labor activists outside Kurdistan was individual and unorganized. But these relations took a more organized form after this date. For example, in a 2 day meeting this year that was held in 1 of mountains around Tehran, I was present as a representative of workers of Khabaz Saqqez, and outcome of meeting was a article 23 resolution in which names of people were also attached to resolution.

It is necessary to mention that at same time as this meeting, it was announced that Mrs. Ana Biondi, a representative of World Workers' Union, came to Iran to investigate massacre of Khatun Abad workers and asked to meet me. We needed a translator to meet with him, so I introduced Mr. Mohsen Hakimi, a labor activist and member of Iranian Writers Association, and he accepted. Our appointment with Mrs. Biondi was on 29 April at Laleh Hotel in Tehran, where security forces and personal uniforms and some members of worker's house were also present. Mrs. Biondi asked representatives of workers house and others to leave room so that she could talk to me privately. Our meeting lasted for a few hours and during this time we discussed labor movement, obstacles to establishment of independent labor organizations, level of government support and pressure of security apparatus. In same meeting, I told Ms. Biondi that I would definitely be arrested after returning to Saqqez and for holding World Labor Day ceremony, which is on 1 May, since it was a leap year. I even invited him to attend World Labor Day ceremony in Saqqez so that he could witness attack of security forces on attendees and labor activists. But while expressing his regret that he cannot participate in ceremony, he said that he had already promised to attend ceremony of World Labor Day to Labor house. I also told them clearly that you do not have detailed information about Workers' House because this government institution has nothing to do with labor movement and independent organizations of workers. Emphasizing that worker's house is party, Islamic Republic workers party; I even mentioned that Workers' House is not registered in Labor Ministry but in Article 10 Commission of Parties.

After meeting, I invited Mohsen Hakimi and his friends to Saqqez to meet labor activists and friends of trade union. He

said that he would come to Saqqez, but he didn't say just on World Labor Day.

This is despite fact that we previously decided location of event and approved some provisions for holding World Workers' Day in Saqqez, in addition to organizing "May Day Parade" which was temporary and was automatically canceled after event ended, we had determined place of ceremony and approved some provisions, including that "Mahmoud Salehi", "Borhan Divangar" and "Syedjalal Hosseini" should take responsibility for organizing ceremony in court and immediately go on a hunger strike if they are arrested. Rest of members of council were also obliged to organize their families to hold a protest rally in front of governor's office and intelligence department, while covering ceremony and strike of detainees.

As soon as I arrived in Saqqez, I found out that atmosphere of city is extremely secure. However, at 6 o'clock in morning on 1<sup>st</sup> May, our home phone rang, I picked up phone, Mohsen Hakimi and Bahram Dezaki were on line. They said we are in Saqqez and please follow us. As if I had been thrown down from a high mountain. I did not expect them to come at all, even in situation where a heavy security atmosphere has been created and it is possible that everyone will be arrested.

Ceremony was held in children's park, 1 of most crowded places in city center. We were supposed to gather at 5 o'clock in evening in front of Mulazahed Mosque, wrap our arms around security forces and enter park.

Unfortunately, some people did not come on time, and after a few minutes, security forces attacked us and arrested first person. During detention, I had to take time, resist and protest so that my friends could reach me in meantime. I had a fight with security and it took about 15 minutes. Security guards told

gathered protestors that they were drug addicts. As soon as I heard this, I broke car window and got out. Conflict between people and security increased, and during this interval, I spoke loudly in front of people for about 6 minutes. On this day, at least 35 of our friends were arrested and taken to Saqqez prison. 1 of our 2 guests, Mohsen Hakimi, was arrested. Of course, it goes without saying that we held World Day ceremony among prisoners.

World coverage of our arrest and hunger strike had confused interrogators. On 1 hand, representative of World Workers' Union was aware of possibility of our arrest, and on other hand, wide coverage of arrest and our strike had put a lot of pressure on intelligence department.

Finally, after 12 days of detention and hunger strike and heavy bail, we were released from prison and through a heavy legal and judicial process, except for me, who was sentenced to 1 year of imprisonment and 3 years of suspended sentence, "Burhan Divangar", "Mohsen Hakimi" and "Syedjalal Hosseini" were sentenced to a 3 year suspended sentence.

Reza Shahabi, a bus driver who did not fail his right

Workers' union of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company announced in 13. 10. 2023 that initial sentence of 6 years in prison and 2 years of exile for Reza Shahabi and Hassan Saeedi was confirmed in the appeals court.

According to telegram channel of this syndicate, these labor activists of unit company were tried on charge of "propaganda activity against system and society and collusion with intention of committing a crime against security of country".

This is second time that Reza Shahabi has been sentenced to long term prison. He was imprisoned for 7 years between 2010



and 2017 and was released from prison after widespread protests by bus drivers of Vahad company in Tehran.

Mr. Shahabi is currently 1 of most important workers' rights activists, although he is in prison, and if his current sentence is implemented, he will spend more years behind prison.

Who is Reza Shahabi?

Reza Shahabi is a labor and political activist whose name is tied to workers' union of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Unit.

Shortly after victory of Islamic Revolution and establishment of "Islamic Republic" system, activities of any labor unions and associations that were not affiliated with government faced many obstacles.

Over time, all these unions were closed.

But in 2014, Iranian workers' rights movement faced a rare development; a group of employees of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Unit Company decided to revive their union.

In this group, Reza Shahabi, along with Mansour Asanlou and Ebrahim Maddi, were main figures.

Reza Shahabi, who was born in 1973 in Shabestar city in West Azarbaijan province, says that he has been working since he was a child and even started working in Tehran bus company after receiving his high school diploma.

Syndicate of Tehran Bus Company was established for first time in 1958. But with formation of Islamic Republic, like other unions, it reached point of complete destruction and ceased to operate.

Shahabi became a member of Directors board with general election of union assembly in 2005, and his activities expanded

to improve condition of drivers. In same year, a group of union leaders of Vahed Company were arrested by Mansour Asanlu's attack.

Shahabi and other members of Directors board called for a strike by bus drivers; a program that caused him and a number of other board members to be arrested for several days.

Next strike of union to improve job status of members took place in February 2005, which this time caused Shahabi and a number of drivers to be fired from bus company.

Shahabi filed a complaint against his dismissal from that time, and after 4 years of follow up, he managed to return to work with decision of Administrative Offenses Board.

Years in prison

In June 2010, 1 year after movement's nationwide protests, Reza Shahabi was arrested.

After a long period of indecision and under severe interrogations, Abolqasem Salavati, a judge who is known for giving harsh sentences and executions, sentenced Shahabi to 1 year for "propaganda activity against regime" and 5 years for charge of "collusion with intention of acting against national security". Sentenced to prison.

Shahabi went on a hunger strike due to his poor physical conditions and lack of treatment by prison and judicial authorities.

His illness in prison progressed to such an extent that his body was partially paralyzed.

In 2017, a number of global trade unions and trade unions, including French and Swedish trade unions, demanded Shahabi's release.

In 2017, BRT bus drivers in Tehran protested continued imprisonment of Reza Shahabi by slowing down and turning on their lights.

Finally, he was released in March 2017. Relatives of Reza Shahabi said that he suffered 2 strokes in prison and is in a worrying condition.

Rababe Rezaei, Reza Shahabi's wife, while following up on his condition, turned to production of homemade food products, including a pickle shop, which was well received by public.

After his release from prison, Mr. Shahabi continued same business with his wife.

But he did not give up his labor activities and was arrested for a week on World Workers' Day in 2019. This was not last time.

Shahabi was arrested on 11. 5. 2022 at his home and transferred to detention center of Intelligence Ministry known as Ward 209 of Evin Prison.

Before his arrest, he had announced in an open letter to officials of judiciary that he and his family had been threatened with death.

In July 2022, he went on a hunger strike to protest his situation in prison.

In a statement about recent arrest of Shahabi and a number of other activists, Workers' Union of United Company wrote that goal of security organizations is to pressure the detainees "to confess".

In 1 of statements of this union about Reza Shahabi, it is stated: "Wahed Company Workers' Union, while condemning the repeated scenario of confessions to suppress labor activists and teachers, demands unconditional release of Reza Shahabi and Hassan Saeedi, 2 members of Wahed Syndicate and "all arrested teachers and those related to new false filing of Information Ministry against independent organizations of workers and teachers".

This labor activist, along with Hassan Saeedi, another union activist, was sentenced to 6 years in prison, 2 years of exile, and a ban on membership in political parties on charges of "propaganda activity against system" and "collusion" in Mehr, Branch 26 of Revolutionary Court of Tehran and activities in social networks were condemned.

According to Kolbarnews, Reza Shahabi, famous activist of Tehran Bus Unit Workers' Union, was released from Evin prison on Sunday, 1. 9. 2024 after being arrested by regime agents in spring 2022 and after serving more than 3 years of imprisonment.

Hossein Taj, lawyer of this labor activist's case, said: "After Reza Shahabi was sentenced to 6 years in prison, court accepted request for retrial and case was sent to Hamarz branch. Hamarz branch has reduced Reza Shahabi's sentence by 3 years and 6 months".

According to Mr. Taj, "after issuance of new verdict, Reza Shahabi was subject to amnesty circular 2022. We again gave a bill to security and enforcement of sentences. "Tehran Prosecutor's Office finally agreed with amnesty of Reza Shahabi, and he was released under amnesty directive 2022, and in fact case is closed".

Keyvan Mohtadi, a teacher with concern for justice and equality

Some people are arrested 1 after another. List of political prisoners is getting longer and longer. Names must be remembered constantly. Keyvan Mohtadi is one of recently arrested. Who is he?

Keyvan Mohtadi, a writer, translator, teacher and worker support activist, was arrested on 8. 5. 2022 along with his wife Anisha Asadollahi by Pasdaran Forces Intelligence Organization. Who is Keyvan Mohtadi and what do we know about his activities and case?

Keyvan Mohtadi, 1 of young and socialist intellectuals, has been sentenced to 6 years in prison on a false charge.

Keyvan Mohtadi, born in 1986, graduated from Sharif University of Technology in Metallurgy. His father is a film director and translator, and his mother, Farzaneh Amirijah, is a painter. Mohtadi has been working in field of working children and socially disadvantaged since his youth.

This writer and translator was previously arrested once after popular protests against results of presidential election in 2009, and again in 2018 during protests of workers' union of Tehran and Suburban Bus Company.

Mohtadi was arrested in 2018, along with Reza Shahabi and Hassan Saeedi, 2 members of workers' union of Vahed Company, along with Amir Abbas Azramvand, a journalist, and Raham Yeganeh, 1 of supporters of labor activists, after a short period of time, he was released along with other detainees. But in May 2022, he was arrested again along with his wife Anisha Abdullahi, and now she is serving his sentence.

Protesting suffering of workers

From his student days until today, besides writing and translating numerous books and articles, Keyvan Mohtadi has defended rights of workers by signing statements and participating in trade unions.

Keyvan Mohtadi, in 1 of statements in January 2015, together with 400 civil activists, protested against insulting and violent treatment of peddlers in Tehran subway. In part of this statement it was stated:

"Metro peddlers are not strangers. They are our friends, our fellow citizens, our neighbors. They don't want to hurt us, never have. Only unfortunate economic conditions prevailing in Iran, which the government ministers have also admitted, has put hand selling as an option and sometimes only option in front of them. It is enough to remember high rate of unemployment on 1 hand and wide spread of all kinds of oppressive contracts on other hand in recent years to find out how and why peddling in subway trains has flourished to such an extent".

Protesting security of trade union activity and protection of workers' rights and unfortunate conditions of detention of Jafar Azimzadeh, chairman of board of directors of Free Workers' Union in June 2016, along with 3500 civil activists, among other actions of Keyvan Mohtadi, in support of activists independent worker.

### Writing as action

Books and articles translated and authored by Keyvan Mohtadi are mostly in field of criticism of capitalism, philosophy, labor relations and workers' lives. "New Spaces of Freedom, New Lines of Unity", "Innovative Anxieties" and "Marx and Lincoln, Unfinished Revolutions" are among books translated by Keyvan Mohtadi.

In article "We wander at night and get swallowed up in fire", which was published in June 2018 on "Maydan" website, Mohtadi writes after describing relationship between customers, goods and sellers in a large store in Tehran:

"Magic of store, which was result of hiding relationship between superstructure and substructure, offered abundance only in product and not in producers. Complete separation of final product from its production relations prevents direct representation of infrastructure by superstructure. Dazzling explosion of light is a surplus of production that manifests itself independently of relations of its producers. Because of this, light, abundance, purchasing power and in December 2018 have all remained intact.

When he was a student, Kayvan Mohtadi started translating and publishing articles in field of political philosophy by starting a magazine. At same time, in an interview with student magazine "Dad", Keyvan Mohtadi expressed his views on student activity as follows:

"If we consider student as a political force, we can see by looking at history that it has played a very decisive role between forces that maintain status quo and forces that want to change status quo".

Keyvan Mohtadi also wrote in an article entitled "What will world look like without work", which he jointly wrote in 2017:

"Trying to consider work as a moral and personal issue, while it is a global, structural and economic issue, has destructive consequences. In addition to unemployed and unstable workers, these consequences also include those who are found fit for work when they are clearly not fit to work. Denial of disability benefits by Labor and Pensions Department had little

effect on employment of those found fit for work. But it left many in a state of suicide and poverty".

### Rearrest and security filing

Recent arrest of Keyvan Mohtadi and his wife Anisha Asadollahi on 8. 5. 2022, at same time as arrest of dozens of labor activists and teachers across country in early days of May 2022. After about a month of solitary confinement and harsh and prolonged interrogations, Keyvan Mohtadi was transferred from solitary cell of Ward 209 of Evin Prison, belonging to Islamic Republic Information Ministry, to multi person cell of same ward.

This writer and translator, like all trade union activists imprisoned in Evin prison, such as Reza Shahabi, a member of workers union of Tehran and Suburban Bus Company, Mohammad Habibi, Jafar Ebrahimi, Hassan Saeedi, Reza Shahabi, Iskandar Lotfi, Shaban Mohammadi and Masoud Nikkhah, among others Since last days of June 2022, teachers and labor union activists have been denied phone calls and visits to their families.

In same period, Islamic Republic of Iran Radio, by airing 2 films on its different channels, has made illegal accusations against Keyvan Mohtadi and other arrested activists in this case.

In these 2 films, Sedavasima, with permission of Information Ministry, has accused these activists of "espionage" under pretext of arrival of 2 French trade union activists named Cecile Coller and Jacques Parry in Tehran and their meeting with several imprisoned labor activists.

Amir Raisian, defense lawyer of Keyvan Mohtadi and his wife Anisha Asadollahi, in an interview with "Sharq" newspaper, while protesting broadcast of these 2 films, announced that 2<sup>nd</sup>



branch of Mogdisi Prosecutor's Office only mentioned that charges against these 2 writers and translators were "security".

Farzaneh Amirijah, mother of Keyvan Mohtadi, recently in a video she published on her Instagram page, referring to her son's activities in field of authoring and translating books and articles in various artistic, political and social fields, asked judicial and security institutions, What is Keyvan's crime and why should he be deprived of meeting him?

On 4. 7. 2022, Farzaneh Amirijah protested that she had not heard from her son and his wife Anisha Asadollahi for more than 3 weeks, and announced that investigator of branch 2 of Holy Prosecutor's Office and officials of Evin prison, by denying that prison activists were not allowed to meet, were playing psychotic with their families.

By raising speculations about possibility of a general hunger strike by prisoners in this case in Evin prison, he demanded an immediate meeting with his son Keyvan Mohtadi.

Families of these prisoners recently wrote in an open letter protesting against being denied right to visit their loved ones.

"As family members of recently arrested, we demand an immediate stop to false cases against our loved ones and an end to their repeated, humiliating and threatening interrogations. There is no justification for their continued detention. Threats and insults by prison officials and interrogators in dealing with detainees and their family members are a clear example of persecution and must be stopped immediately".

During 2 months of illegal arrest of Keyvan Mohtadi and Anisha Asadollahi, Iranian Writers Association has emphasized right of

freedom of expression of writers in several statements protesting this arrest.

This civil organization, in a statement on 23. 6. 2022, in response to prohibition of these 2 prisoners from meeting with their families, asked independent writers and freedom fighters from all over world to voice their protest against these repressions and abuses.

Filing of a case against Keyvan Mohtadi and his wife Anisha Asadollahi, along with labor activists and teachers' union activists, has caused concern for many civil activists. According to them, Islamic Republic intends to increase cost of such activities by filing cases for union activists and their supporters.

According to Kolbarnews, Keyvan Mohtadi, famous activist of Tehran Bus Unit Workers' Union, was released from Evin prison on Sunday, 1. 9. 2024 after being arrested by regime agents in spring 2022 and after serving more than 3 years of imprisonment.

Hossein Taj, lawyer of this labor activist's case, said: "After Keyvan Mohtadi was sentenced to 6 years in prison, court accepted request for retrial and case was sent to Hamarz branch. Hamarz branch has reduced Keyvan Mohtadi's sentence by 3 years and 6 month".

According to Mr. Taj, "after issuance of new verdict, Keyvan Mohtadi was subject to amnesty circular 2022. We again gave a bill to security and enforcement of sentences. "Tehran Prosecutor's Office finally agreed with amnesty of Keyvan Mohtadi, and he was released under amnesty directive 2022, and in fact case is closed".

Who is Hassan Saeedi?

On 29. 12. 2019, Mustafa Razavi, lawyer of "Hassan Saeedi", a member of "Tehran and Suburbs Bus Unit Workers' Union", announced approval of his client's 5 year prison sentence in appeals court.

This lawyer said: "After appeal, case was referred to Branch 36 of Appeal Court of Tehran. We were waiting for them to convene a meeting. Usually, in cases with long term prison sentences, they hold a meeting and listen to defense of lawyer. But unfortunately, they announced without holding a meeting, let's go to court. "After going to court, I found out that defense of appeal was rejected and sentence of lower court, that is, 5 years of imprisonment and 2 years of banning use of social networks and smartphones, was confirmed".

Of course, he also talked about pursuing case and filing a complaint with Supreme Court and expressed his hope that this verdict would be overturned.

Hassan Saeedi's case was opened due to his participation in "World Workers' Day" rally on 30. 4. 2019. That day, he was arrested along with dozens of labor activists who attended rally in front of Islamic Council. After his arrest, Saeedi was transferred to Ward 209 of "Evin" prison and finally, after 33 days of detention, he was temporarily released with a bail of 330 million tomans.

On 6. 8. 2019, in 1<sup>st</sup> session of court, charges of "assembly and collusion to commit a crime against security of country" and "disturbance of public order and peace" were explained to this labor activist. Branch 26 of Tehran Revolutionary Court headed by Judge "Iman Afshari" sentenced Hassan Saeedi, a member of workers' union of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Unit Company, to 5 years of imprisonment and banning use of smart telecommunication devices such as smart mobile phones as

well as banning membership in parties, groups and condemned political and social categories for 2 years.

Case of this labor activist has been sent to criminal court on charge of disturbing public order and will be tried separately on this charge.

Hassan Saeedi was born in 1976 and is married. His wife, Nasreen Rahimi, is a housewife. They have 2 sons named "Amir Hossein" and "Pouyan". This labor activist, who continued his education until graduation, has started his trade union activity since 2004. Saeedi has been fired and returned to work many times since 2005. But last time he was fired from Tehran bus company in 2012.

A member of Tehran and Suburban Bus Workers' Union told that Saeedi was arrested and released several times during these years for a period of 24 hours: "In 2008, in line with union activities, due to need of this union for a dominant force in Labor and Social Security Law, with perseverance he showed, he completely mastered labor and social security laws and regulations in a short time and defended workers of single company with a notarized power of attorney in labor and social security offices. Between 2008 and 2011, when bus company was firing workers permanently and under false pretenses, he managed to get a return to work vote for more than 200 dismissed workers from labor department using his legal capacities. Issuing return to work votes during this period prevented expansion and dismissal of other workers of this company until finally, in 2011, such dismissals were stopped in the single company".

He adds about this labor activist: "Saeedi, who was 1 of main forces of strike in area of 5 companies, was arrested by police on 28. 1. 2005, in company's service bus, before entering

workplace. He spent 10 days in detention and was finally released from Evin prison. But right after his release, he was fired. After 4 years, in 2009, following a series of complaints in labor offices and judicial system, Saeedi managed to get order to return to his work.

Joy of victory and return to Hassan Saeedi's work was very short. Because 3 days after he returned to work, he was fired again due to his union activities: "Mr. Saeedi did not hesitate and after taking his complaint to labor department, he managed to get order to return to work again in 2010. He, who did not stop his union activities when he returned to work, was fired for 3 time after 3 months. However, due to his continuous follow up in his complaint against employer, in 2011, Labor Department once again issued a decision in his favor so that he can return to work.

After Hassan Saeedi's return to work in 2012, this member of workers' union of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Unit organized a protest campaign to increase company's workers' salaries, which was successful and led to an increase in workers' salaries. But after that, he along with "Vahid Fereydoni", another member of this syndicate, faced a new case shortly and Saeedi was fired from his job for 4 time.

Workers' union of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company issued a statement at time of issuing this decision, calling it "cruel" and declaring: "Issuing this decision, while their activities were to defend livelihood and rights of workers, was to prevent activities of right of Hassan Saeedi.

Now, in 7 year of 4 period of Saeedi's dismissal from work, his 5 year prison sentence has been confirmed in appeals court.

Deprivation of imprisoned labor activist Hassan Saeedi from contact and meeting with his family.

According to information published on Telegram channel of Free Workers' Union, continuing to put pressure on Hassan Saeedi, 1 of labor activists imprisoned in Evin prison, prison authorities have denied him from calling and visiting his family since 20. 12. 2023.

Mr. Saeedi was transferred from Ward 4 to Ward 8 of Evin Prison as punishment from "Tuesday, 26. 12. 2023" and has been deprived of meeting with his family.

Prison officials have increased pressure on prisoners of ward 4 of Evin prison, and a number of other prisoners in this ward have been denied right to make phone calls and have canceled all face to face visits.

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