



Request to the International Labor Organization to send a delegation to Iran to investigate the cause of the explosion in the Tabas coal mine and the death of 50 mine workers.

On 21 September 2024 due to explosion of methane gas in the Madanjo coal mine, located in the city of Tabas, South Khorasan province, 50 workers have lost their lives. 17 workers have been injured, and the fate of a few workers who have been trapped deep in the mine is still unknown.

According to the reports, the unit where the explosion occurred did not have separate gas ventilation, and its ventilation was connected to the neighbouring unit. As a result, methane gas spread to that unit as well. The reports indicates that the gas level was not measured before the start of the work shift and the mine does not have a methane gas sensor or alarm system. All indications are that the mine, which was handed over to the private sector a few years ago, lacks the most basic work safety standards and its tools and equipment are also old and worn out.

As a standard procedure in the Islamic Republic of Iran in reaction to such incidents, immediately after the explosion, various government officials, from the supreme leader to the president and others, sent messages of regrets and condolence to the families of the dead workers to calm the situation. The government also announced 3 days of public mourning in the province, and promised to pay compensation to the families of the killed workers with the aim of diverting public attention away from the real causes of the incident. All these efforts are to cover up various reports detailing scandalous ways public owned companies (including Tabas mine) have been privatised, the failure of government officials and inspectors to monitor safety at work, and the failure of employers in complying with labour standards by paying bribes to government officials to obtain health and safety approvals.

Iranian workers are victims of the profit-seeking policies of private and government employers. The number of people killed in work accidents in Iran in recent years has been between 1,850 and 2,100 people per year, which is among the highest numbers of victims of work accidents in the world. The number of injured people due to work accidents is ten times more.

The Tabas mine explosion is the deadliest incident so far but similar incidents are not uncommon within Iranian mines, as detailed below:

- In May 2016, 42 workers were killed under the debris in Yurt mine in Golestan province as a result of explosion.

- On September 6, 2020, 4 people died and one person was seriously injured due to the collapse of tunnel number 2 at Hajdak coal mine located around city of Kerman.
- In May 2021, 2 workers were killed as a result of non-observance of work safety standards in Eastern Alborz coal mine (Tarzeh) near city of Dameghan.
- On September 13, 2021, due to the collapse of Hajdak coal mine in Kerman province 35 mine workers were lost their lives .
- In 2022 , 2 workers were killed by the collapse of Pabadana coal mine near city of Kohbanan.
- In September 2023 , 6 workers lost their lives due to an explosion in the Tarzah mine, and the Industries Commission set up to investigate the causes of the accident came up with no conclusion.
- On June 2, 2024 , one worker died and 5 others were injured due to the collapse of Abnil coal mine in Bibi Hayat village in Kerman.
- On June 16,2024 the Shazand sand mine near city of Shazand collapsed and four workers died under a pile of sand and stones. The body of one of the dead still remained under the rubble.

According to the Ministry of Labor, in addition to those killed in the fatal accident in Tabas mine, from March 23, 2023 to 17 June 2024 , 26 mine workers lost their lives due to non-compliance with safety standards. Meanwhile, MP Ali Khezrian, after the Tabas mine explosion, has said that "if the way of working in these mines is not improved, the lives of 10,000 mine workers in Tabas will be in danger."

It should be said that the workers killed in Tabas mine were paid only 12 million Tomans per month, equivalent to 200 USD, which means like most of Iranian workers they lived below the poverty line.

The series of work accidents in Iran's mines, the repetition of accidents in the same mine within a short time frames, the shocking and fatal statistics of annual work accidents in Iran all indicate that millions of Iranian workers work in extremely hazardous environments. priority for the government and private employers is not to comply with work safety standards, but to reduce the cost of production and earn as much profit as possible. The cost of this policy is paid by the Iranian workers their lives.

We, the trade unions in different countries, in response to the demands of the labour activists and labour organizations in Iran, request the International Confederation of Trade Unions ITUC to coordinate with the International Labor Organization (ILO) as soon as possible to organize a delegation from the ILO to Iran with the following tasks:

- Investigate the cause of the explosion in Madanjo mine in Tabas.
- Research the reasons for the high number of work accidents and the number of victims of these accidents.
- Investigate and research level of implementation of the International Labor Organization Conventions on work safety standards in Iran, which the Islamic Republic is officially committed to.

We emphasize that it is necessary to give priority to dialogue with Iranian workers' representatives who witnessed work accidents in all investigations. It is also necessary that the formation of any possible fact-finding committee includes workers' representatives, and any frameworks agreed with the Iranian government regarding monitoring compliance with safety standards include Iranian labour representatives.

Swedish Trade Union Platform Iran

Stockholm on 24 September 2024

Swedish Trade Union Platform Iran

Swedish Trade Union Platform Iran was established in 2014 by LO, the Transport Workers' Union, Municipal, If Metal and the Teachers' Union. Our ambition and goal are to be part of the international support for free and unaffiliated trade union rights in Iran and to inform the Swedish trade union movement and society about the situation of Human and Trade Union rights in Iran. Swedish Trade Union Platform - Iran condemn the Islamic regime's harassment and imprisonment of representatives of free and independent Trade Union organizations in Iran. The work is led by project manager Saied Tagavi in collaboration with Leif Isaksson, international secretary, LO.