

Preface

Following the upsurge in Iranian workers' struggles that began in 2004 many activists in various countries became involved in solidarity work defending the Iranian working class in its fight for justice and 21st century pay and conditions. In particular, the campaign defending the seven labour activists trying to organise a May Day rally in Saghez and 'Iranian workers are not alone!' played an important role in highlighting the plight of Iranian workers for the first time in two decades.

These and other campaigns involved signing petitions, sending protest emails to the Iranian regime's leaders and international organisations, pickets outside the regime's diplomatic missions in over a dozen countries across three continents, organising meetings and collections, and lobbying politicians and parliamentarians.

Throughout these campaigns the supporters of the Iranian working class, particularly those in Europe and the Americas, have been unable to follow the issues as well as they would like and to become fully involved because of unfamiliarity with many of the longstanding issues facing the workers.

This handbook is an attempt by the Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network (IWSN) to introduce trade unionists, socialists, human rights activists, and anyone else who wishes to take up the cause of Iranian workers, to the history and current problems of the struggle for basic rights like the right to strike, or indeed, to be paid in return for work(!), and to suggest ways that these activists can become involved in this work.

With the recent drop in oil prices to below \$50 the Iranian regime's room for manoeuvre will become ever more limited. The budget deficit, inflation, unemployment and so on, all point to an escalation

in the class struggle and major battles and upsurges in the coming years.

We aim to give a brief introduction to the history of the Iranian working class and the labour movement and the main issues and obstacles facing the class today. We hope that the handbook will first of all show that, despite its episodic ebbs and flows, the struggle continues and is heading for a historic showdown with the regime. We hope that it will also motivate you and your trade union or organisation to become more involved in solidarity work and to join IWSN.

By its nature a handbook like this is limited in its scope and we will endeavour to expand it in future editions. Your comments on it will be most welcome in helping us to improve it.

Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network
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