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4 June 2021

Dear President Rouhani,

I write on behalf of the Australian trade union movement to express our deep concern over the situation of two well-known workers' rights defenders in Iran, Mahmoud Salehi and Osman Ismaili. They were arrested on 16 May 2021 after being summoned to the Prosecutor's office in Saqqez. According to our information, the two are charged with endangering national security by disseminating information concerning the celebration of 1 May, a day celebrated by working people around the world for well over a century. They were recently convicted of 'spreading propaganda against the system' under Article 500 of the Islamic Penal Code. Since they refused bail on principle, they are now in prison.

Mahmoud Salehi is in poor health and in need of regular medical attention, having lost both kidneys as a result of his past mistreatment in prison. For many years, as founder of an independent bakers' union in Iran's Kurdistan province, he has been harassed, arrested, and repeatedly imprisoned for defending the fundamental rights of workers to freedom of association, rights set out in instruments of international law. These latest arrests and convictions constitute serious violations of core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

We urge the Government of Iran, as a matter of urgency, to secure the unconditional and immediate release of Mr. Salehi and Mr. Ismaili and guarantee their physical and psychological well-being and call on your Government to fully respect the right of all workers to freedom of association.

Yours sincerely



Michele O'Neil  
**President**  
**ACTU**

CC:

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