Mr. President,

Education International (EI), the global union federation of teachers, which represents over 30 million members in 171 countries, remains deeply concerned by the repression of teacher union activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

EI condemns the most recent arrest and imprisonment of teachers and trade union activists attending a union meeting convened by the Coordinating Council of Teachers Trade Associations in a private property on 16 September (Seshhanbeh 26 Sharivar 1387). The Coordinating Council of Teachers Trade Associations convened the meeting to give teachers the opportunity to discuss peacefully possible activities to celebrate World Teachers Day. Every year on 5 October, millions of educators worldwide undertake public activities highlighting that quality education is a fundamental right of everyone.

Unfortunately, our colleagues in Iran did not even have the chance to meet and to share ideas and knowledge about World Teachers’ Day. Teachers approaching to attend the trade union meeting were brutally molested by intelligence agents and were brought to various police stations. After 16 hours of illegal detention, 22 teachers were released. Others were released later. All were interrogated without any proven allegation. Some were beaten. Mobile phones were confiscated and have not been returned to date.

In addition, EI continues to object to the Ministry of Interior order banning teacher union activities. The right of trade unions and teacher associations to operate and hold meetings to discuss occupational questions, without prior authorization, is an essential element of freedom of association and public authorities should refrain from any interference which would restrict trade union rights. The arrest of trade union leaders and members constitute a violation of the trade union rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

EI respectfully urges you to intervene to make sure that the order banning teacher union activities is revoked to make sure that the right of workers’ organisations to exercise their activities and to hold meetings and public protests relating to the conditions of work and economic and social policy be respected. EI also requests that teachers arrested in connection with the trade union meeting convened by the Coordinating Council of Teachers Trade Associations do not suffer consequences in their private and professional life. Education International and its affiliates worldwide will continue to monitor the trade union environment in Iran.

Sincerely yours,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary

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