



Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

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May 23, 2017

To His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Excellency,

We are writing on behalf of more than 70,000 academic staff at over 100 universities and colleges across Canada to express our alarm at your government's apprehension and imprisonment of Mr. Esmail Abdi, General Secretary of the Tehran Teacher Trade Association.

For his leadership role and legitimate participation in trade union activities, Mr. Abdi has been sentenced to six years in prison on false charges. The blatant disregard for Mr. Abdi's rights to freedom of association, expression, and the right to travel contravenes the central tenets of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a convention to which Iran is a signatory.

Since April 30, Mr. Abdi has been on a hunger strike. Reports indicate that his health is rapidly deteriorating. Reports also indicate that Abdi is kept in harsh detention conditions in the notorious Evin prison. He was recently transferred to a new prison ward where he is denied communication with his family and lawyer. We are greatly concerned for his well-being.

CAUT calls upon you to respect fundamental human and trade union rights by releasing Mr. Abdi and dropping the unfounded charges against him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Robinson  
Executive Director

cc: The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs