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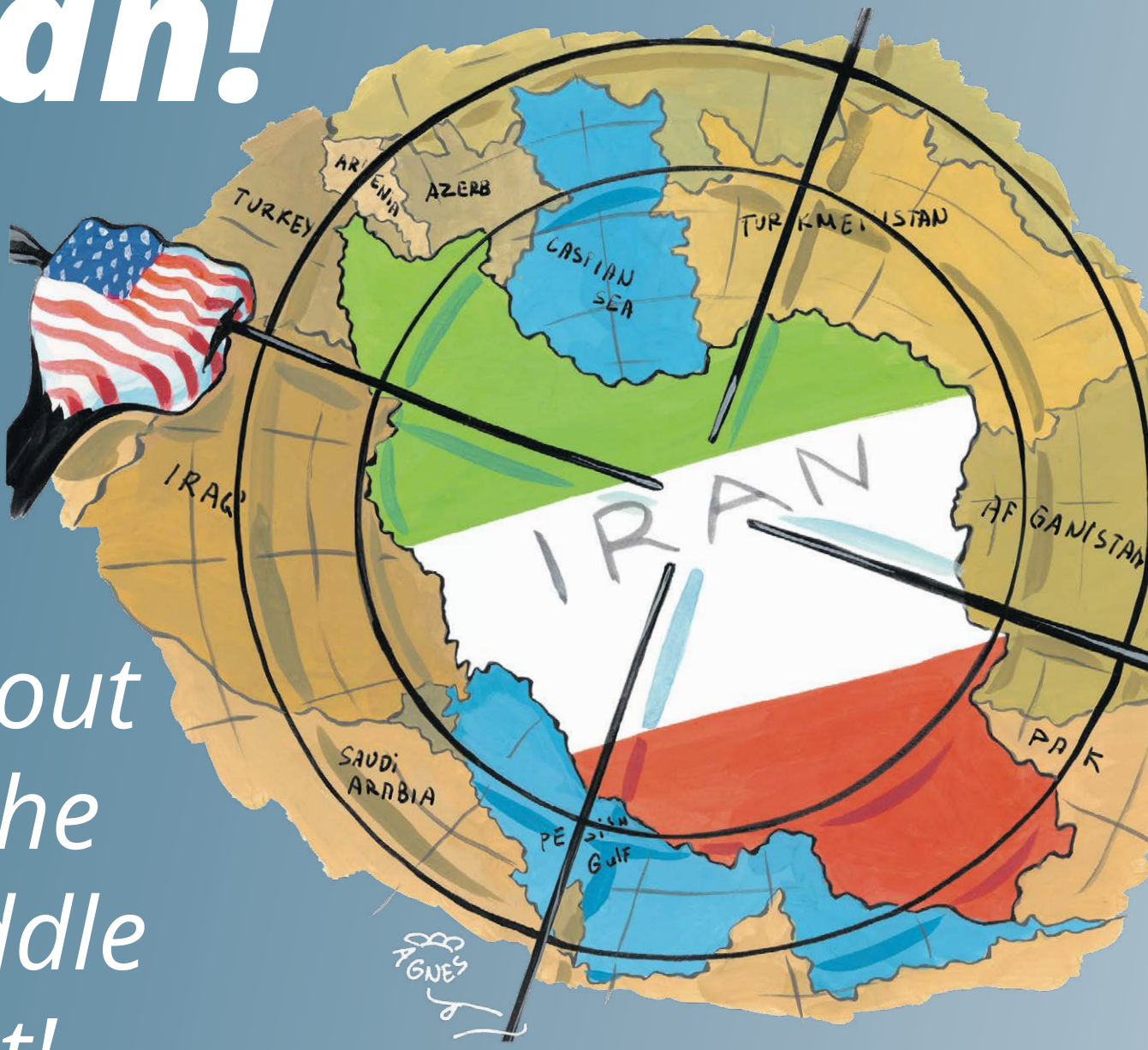
Hands off Iran!



US out of the Middle East!

Editorial: Conflict and Crimes

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Committee for the Defence of Iranian People's Rights

www.codir.net

The illegal United States/Israeli military aggression against Iran is not only a threat to the people of Iran but also threatens a dangerous escalation of instability and conflict in the Middle East and far beyond.

The strategic confusion of Trump and the manipulations of its ally, the genocidal Israeli state, is producing not only uncertainties in world politics but the prospect of prolonged war.

Public opinion polls across the United States indicate a consistent lack of support for the ongoing military conflict with Iran. Major surveys, such as those conducted by Marist Poll and Ipsos, have consistently found that a majority of Americans oppose the military action, viewing it as a decision that has not been worth the costs.

In Europe, the sentiment is similarly characterised by widespread opposition and concern. Studies conducted by organisations like YouGov, amongst others, confirm that a majority of citizens in major European nations reject military intervention, with many expressing deep alarm about the potential for regional instability. These trends reflect a significant disconnect between current military actions and the prevailing public desire for diplomatic restraint and neutrality across the continent.

In Iran itself following decades of mismanagement and oppression by the Islamist dictatorship the economy is close to collapse and the people are desperate for change. Not into the arms of the US, but for relief from the impact of the economic crisis, in which the cost of basic foodstuffs is rising by 130%, and unemployment is growing with mass layoffs in every sector.

Meantime, Trump and the Iranian regime are becoming more desperate and increasingly isolated. The US President is now threatening to declare the Strait of Hormuz "US territory" and has even threatened to "bomb the shit" out of Oman, ostensibly a US ally, if it stands in his way.

For its part the dictatorship in Tehran is stepping up the detention and execution of trade unionists and human rights activists. Teachers' leaders are being imprisoned, and transport workers in the capital are also facing threats for calling for an end to capital punishment, without exception. This situation and the continued bombing severely limit the capacity of workers and the people to win change.

In Britain 10 trade union leaders representing 2.3 million workers have written to new Prime Minister Andy Burnham urging him to use his influence to bring to an end the aggression against Iran and British cooperation with U.S. bombing operations.

This follows on from the Joint Statement of 18 Trade Union leaders in March 2026 against the war and the Early Day Motion (EDM) signed by 27 MPs in March opposing the illegal war against Iran.

The concerns of trade union and political leaders is not only the impact of the conflict on the Iranian peoples but also the economic impact of the conflict on families in Britain.

CODIR welcomes their initiative along with the growing number of national trade unions affiliates of CODIR, including UNISON, UCU, FBU, the NEU and RMT who are actively joining the camping to end the war.

Such partnerships and solidarity will strengthen the struggle for peace, human rights and an end to the persecution and execution of desperate youth and activists in Iran!

Editor: Brian Topping

Doubts over diplomatic end to Iran war grow

THE GENERALLY accepted wisdom in most international conflicts is that ultimately a diplomatic solution must prevail. Preferably this is one in which both parties can walk away with some claim to having achieved their objectives. However, the war initiated by the United States and Israel against Iran does not appear to be reaching a diplomatic conclusion. **Steve Bishop reports.**

Smoke rises in the wake of an airstrike in Tehran in March

The deadline outlined in the Iran-US memorandum of understanding (known as the Islamabad Understanding) concluded in mid-August without reaching a final agreement. The 14-point memorandum, signed in June 2026 following more than three months of military conflict, was intended to halt hostilities and establish a framework for a comprehensive accord.

However, escalating tensions and mutual accusations between Tehran and Washington have derailed the implementation of commitments, driving the peace process into a severe deadlock.

Over the past 14 months, Iran has been the target of two joint military attacks by the US and Israel. Iran was attacked for the first time on 13 June 2025. That war lasted 12 days. The second time, Iran was attacked by the US and Israel on 28 February 2026, for approximately 40 days, in the fiercest barrage of the currently ongoing war. On the very first day of this aggression, 156 people were killed in a school in Minab by Tomahawk cruise missile strikes, including 120 elementary school children; the remaining victims included their teachers and parents, among others. According to official Iranian figures, more than 3,500 Iranians were killed during the 40-day bombardment alone. Both attacks began while Iran was at the negotiating table regarding its nuclear programme.

Over 100,000 residential units were destroyed. Complexes in Iran's key industries — such as the steel industry, oil and refining facilities, and various manufacturing plants - were targeted. In addition, hospitals, the pharmaceutical industry, universities, bridges, water treatment plants, and numerous historical monuments across the country were bombed. Iran has estimated the war damage at approximately $270 billion.

Key to the response of the Islamic Republic has been to exert control over access to the Strait Of Hormuz, which remains at the epicentre of the conflict. Commercial shipping traffic has plummeted sharply. Tehran maintains that the complete reopening of the strait is contingent upon the US fulfilling its economic and structural commitments. Conversely, Washington and the Pentagon continue to exert rigid military pressure and issue threats, insisting on the immediate removal of all shipping restrictions.

Direct talks are currently stalled, with diplomatic channels restricted to third-party mediation via countries such as Qatar, Pakistan and Oman in an effort to establish new navigational arrangements or revive dialogue.

However, the US Department of the Treasury has intensified economic sanctions and pressure on Iran's oil exports. In response, Iranian military officials have signalled their readiness to shift from a defensive to an offensive doctrine, while intelligence reports suggest that Iran's power structures are preparing for a protracted standoff.

At present, diplomacy has largely been sidelined by a cycle of mutual recrimination, economic coercion, and military deterrence. The prospect of peace remains precariously dependent on whether either side is willing to adjust its preconditions and take initial confidence-building steps.

The prospects for peace in the Middle East are hanging by a thread, as the dictatorship in Iran struggles to maintain its grip on power, and US imperialism remains determined to exert its hegemony over the region. The losers, as ever, continue to be the people of Iran and the wider Middle East for whom peace, democracy and social justice appear to be distant goals.

Leishman blasts illegal war in Commons debate

THE PARLIAMENTARY debate on the Iran war on 15 July featured an incisive contribution from Brian Leishman MP, representing Alloa and Grangemouth constituency. Mr Leishman gave a clear outline of the current situation, condemning the extent of United States and Israeli aggressive action since June 2025 which has been sustained since February this year.

Mr Leishman, who is also the Parliamentary Chair of Liberation, condemned the United States for sending out contradictory messages about conducting negotiations while, at the same time, escalating the conflict. He highlighted the impact of the conflict on the people of Iran, acknowledging the "enormous struggle of most ordinary Iranians."

The Alloa and Grangemouth MP went on to stress that the latest escalation of action by the US could result in the conflict widening further, stating: "This could very easily become a full-scale all-out war with devastating consequences," pointing out that the environmental and economic impacts would be worldwide and not just confined to the Middle East.

Mr Leishman stressed the illegality of US and Israeli military actions since June 2025; the unravelling of the ceasefire, negotiated without international approval; and the announcement by US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, to dismantle the International Criminal Court as interfering with US military operations, as supporting his view that "It is abundantly clear that diplomacy and international law is in tatters".

Mr Leishman also condemned Iran's "brutally repressive and theocratic regime", its corruption and its economic mismanagement. He said ordinary Iranians were caught between that repression and an "inhumane and suffocating package of US sanctions." Warning against demands that Britain should simply "fall into step and provide direct support without question," he called on the UK to support an immediate and lasting ceasefire followed by the swift resumption of negotiations.

In spite of rhetoric from both sides of the conflict the Iranian people have suffered massively, while at the same time the US had failed to achieve any of its constantly shifting objectives.

The new cycle of action was highlighted as being the latest danger for both the Iranian people and the international economy given the struggle for control of the Strait of Hormuz. While Iran blocks international cargo, the US continues to bomb targets on the Iranian coast and the conflict escalates.

The position of US imperialism in relation to the Persian Gulf but also Venezuela, Greenland, Panama and Canada was flagged by Mr. Leishman as a "stark warning" to any countries trying to appease President Trump.

Mr Leishman went on to condemn cuts in Overseas Development Aid which has been targeted in order to increase military spending. Mr Leishman went on to call for the British government to disassociate itself from President Trump's "dangerous and hypocritical tactics", in particular the US tendency to initiate and pursue illegal wars.

Mr Leishman concluded by reminding the House that the majority of the Iranian people "desire peace and wish to rebuild their shattered country." He recognised that the current war had set back the efforts of Iranian democrats and trade unionists to steer Iran towards democracy, acknowledging that "the future of Iran remains the preserve of the long suffering and long struggling people of Iran themselves."

Brian Leishman in Parliament

IN FULL: Brian Leishman MP wrote to Foriegn Secretary Ed Miliband in July outlining his concerns over Britain's role in the war on Iran. Iran Today reproduces the full letter below.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Our Ref: BL05872

24 July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Britain's role in the ongoing Middle East conflict

I am writing to you as the Member of Parliament for Alloa and Grangemouth to express my profound concerns over Britain's role in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

As the United States continues consecutive night time strikes on Iran, including aircraft sortieing from UK bases, there is a credible risk that Britain may be drawn into the wider conflict.

I am sure you will be aware that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has now made threats against UK bases which are being used by the US Air Force to launch bombing missions, and that Britain's policy on allowing the use of our bases has not been altered by the new Prime Minister.

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you as the Member of Parliament for Alloa and Grangemouth to express my profound concerns over Britain's role in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

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Notwithstanding the threats made against our bases and service personnel, I am horrified at the thought that the UK is assisting the US in carrying out missions which may be targeting civilian infrastructure, which is firmly against international humanitarian law.

With tens of thousands of civilians affected by these strikes, and many innocents being killed including children at Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in southern Minab, I am extremely concerned over the UK's involvement in what is an illegal war started by Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu.

As things stand, the situation can only be described as an endless conflict, one which has resulted in needless death, destruction and devastation. Aside the humanitarian disaster, which alone is a major concern for many of my constituents, we are also feeling the widespread economic fallout.

In order to avoid our bases and personnel coming in harm's way, and to ensure Britain remains on the right side of history in this ongoing conflict, I am urging you to make sure that the UK is not playing an active part in this illegal war.

That includes the prohibition of UK bases being used by the US to launch offensive action. Where the UK should take an active role is around the negotiating table to reduce tensions, achieve a lasting ceasefire and ultimately peace.

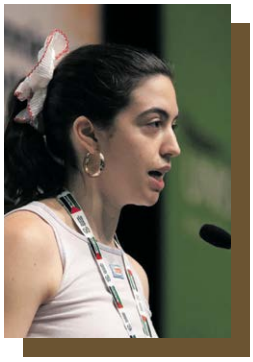
I am hopeful you can provide reassurance for my constituents that as the new Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, you will do everything in your powers to broker an immediate ceasefire to prevent further loss of life and destruction in the region.

I look forward to your response,

Brian Leishman MP

British trade unionists must stand with people of Iran

Statement from UNISON Vice-President Micaela Tracey-Ramos



THE US and Israel have waged an illegal war on Iran in violation of international law. There has been sustained bombing in Iran which has killed thousands of civilians and destroyed civilian infrastructure. Britain has been aiding the US in facilitating these grave crimes, by allowing the use of British bases to be used for US bombing operations. Unequivocally, we must demand that our government end the use of our bases to facilitate war crimes and call for an end to the illegal war.

US led regime change always brought devastation not democracy and human rights to the peoples of those countries. We must be clear, the future of Iran must be determined by the Iranian people themselves, rather than through outside intervention by the US or Israel.

We must stand with progressive forces in Iran, including trade unionists who call for the end of the theocratic regime and are firmly opposed to external intervention. We must call for an end to the executions and human rights violations in Iran, whilst simultaneously call for peace. Without peace, there cannot be the struggle for democratic and human rights, and without democratic and human rights, winning peace is a near impossible task.

Summer of

BRITISH trade unions gave record support to CODIR and the struggle of the Iranian people for peace, democracy and social justice over the summer.

"Trade union action to support the people of Iran is vital," explained CODIR General Secretary Gawain Little, adding: "And the solidarity shown by our affiliated trade unions and many others in the peace movement has been vital, especially at such a crucial time for the people of Iran."

Here are some highlights of CODIR's trade union activity over the summer.

A successful Hands Off Iran! Fringe meeting at UNISON Conference

The panel at Tolpuddle Martyr's Festival

TOLPUDDLE: CODIR took part in the panel discussion War and Crisis in the Middle East at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival in Dorset in July.

CODIR Assistant General Secretary Jamshid Ahmadi told a packed marquee that Iranian working people are totally against the illegal US-Israeli war.

He pointed out that the people of Iran aspire to live in peace, free from economic sanctions. He concluded: "the struggle for peace and the campaign for human and democratic rights including women's rights and trade union rights are interlinked."

TUC South West also invited Mr Ahmadi to lead a workshop on a trade unionist's eye on the war and what it means for Iranian workers in the International Tent.

TUC SW: This year heralded a new chapter of working with the South West region of the TUC, with a CODIR representative invited to annual conference in March.

Jamshid Ahmadi joined MENA Solidarity Network's Khalid Sidahmad to discuss the perils of the wars ravaging Iran and Sudan.

Jamshid explained in detail why the war waged by the US and Israel was illegal and in violation of the UN Charter and international law.

He demonstrated clearly that the war was aimed at regime change in Iran, a violation of international law. He urged those present to join CODIR and campaign for an immediate end to the war in solidarity with the Iranian people.

Dr Jo Grady at the CODIR stall

solidarity

UNISON: Conference agreed an emergency motion in May, condemning the US-Israeli attacks upon Iran and calling for a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

As a long-standing affiliate to CODIR, the union agreed a stand in the conference centre and a fringe meeting both of which were hugely successful.

CODIR volunteers at the stall were able to provide up-to-the-minute information on the struggle of the Iranian people for trade union and democratic rights and for lasting peace. Many who visited were international officers in their branches, and we were able to suggest how UNISON organisations could best contribute to CODIR's work.

Many delegates also attended the Hands Off Iran! fringe meeting.

UCU: Hundreds of University and College Union conference delegates flocked to the CODIR exhibition stand in May, eager to learn more about the struggle against the US-Israeli war launched against Iran and its impact upon the ordinary civilians.

UCU General Secretary Dr Jo Grady visited to discuss the particular impact of the war on Iran's universities and already-beleaguered education sector. She was horrified to note that at least 31 university campuses across Iran have been extensively bombed, while four major universities in Tehran and Esfahan have been razed to the ground.

Dr Grady expressed her unequivocal support for CODIR's continued work going forward.

NEU: A packed fringe meeting at the National Education Union conference, in Brighton in April, heard from Iranian teachers, campaigners and journalists

Formerly imprisoned Iranian teachers' leader Esmail Abdi told the 150 delegates at CODIR's fringe meeting about the struggle of the Iranian people caught between murderous US-Israeli attacks on one hand and intensified repression by the theocratic dictatorship on the other.

Noting her union's consistent stance in support of peace and human and democratic rights in Iran, the NEU's Louise Regan argued that "as educators we need to talk about these issues in our schools." Regan recounted how in her work as a teacher she had recently organised an assembly focusing on Iran and the war, and recalled the gratitude of an Iranian colleague.

The panel at NEU fringe

Peace now!

Ending the war is every progressive's priority

THE PEOPLE of Iran are suffering from a situation not of their making — the economic burden of the war, longstanding economic sanctions, high inflation and corruption.

International pressure on US President Donald Trump should force him to respect international law and the role of the UN. Trump knows that he can't win the war militarily but is more interested in winning what he can from negotiations — even when it means willful misinterpretation of what's been said.

Against this backdrop, Iran Today talks to CODIR General Secretary Gawain Little about the ongoing situation in Iran and what progressives outside of Iran can do to support the people of Iran.

IRAN TODAY: *How have the recent brutal US-Israeli attacks on Iran and the continued oppression of the Iranian people by the ruling dictatorship in Iran impacted upon CODIR's campaigning?*

Gawain Little: The illegal unilateral assaults launched on Iran by the United States and Israel, first in June 2025 and then from 28 February 2026 onwards, not only resulted in the mass killing of civilians but have also served to set back domestic opposition currents and the Iranian protest movement hugely.

We unequivocally condemn the illegal war launched against Iran and hold that the main victims of this criminal folly are the blameless and long-suffering Iranian people themselves. It is the role of CODIR to work alongside the wider peace movement to oppose war and imperialist intervention waged against Iran.

At the same time, we maintain our consistent opposition to the Islamic Republic dictatorship and its serial abuses against the Iranian people over decades

The horrific events of January 2026, which saw the massacring by the Islamic Republic regime of thousands of protesters, was undoubtedly a "game-changer" in terms of any discussion as to the struggle inside Iran and the scale of killing places this chapter among the very worst in the country's bloody recent history.

A heavy blow was dealt to a popular protest movement that had been gathering steam and gaining traction within Iranian civil society up to the point of the bloody crackdown.We have always been conscious as an organisation operating from outside Iran that our responsibility is to raise the voices of the Iranian people and act as an effective conduit for relevant information on currents and issues inside Iran that otherwise might not receive much attention or coverage elsewhere — particularly the struggle for human and democratic rights, including labour and trade union rights, in Iran — and thereby help to raise awareness of them for an international audience and build solidarity accordingly, not least among British trade unionists.

IT: *What is your assessment of the stated basis of the US-Israeli strikes on Iran, and its main outcomes?*

GL: We consider the US-Israeli attacks and launching of war on Iran, both times while Tehran was sat at the negotiating table, to have constituted grave and flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The initial stated objective of this war was "regime change," though this has subsequently veered to the "de-nuclearisation" of Iran, despite the US claims to have "obliterated" Iran's nuclear program during the June 2025 war; the disbandment of Iran's proxy network; and now control of the Strait of Hormuz trade route, an issue that has only arisen with the US decision to go to war against Iran in the first place.

The war's primary impact has been upon the Iranian people with thousands of innocent civilians killed (not least the 120 elementary schoolchildren martyred in Minab) and the wanton destruction of schools, universities, hospitals, residential neighbourhoods, factories and industrial complexes, roads and bridges, as well as other critical civilian infrastructure. It cannot be understated... The toll exacted upon Iran and its population has been huge!

Beyond Iran, the war has served to further underline an already established pattern of unilaterally taken military action and the undermining of international law in a manner that does not bode well for the future. Instability and volatility across the Middle East region is spiralling and an already faltering global economy is further imperilled, with significant knock-on effects for the lives of working people here in Britain and around the globe, the longer the war on Iran continues.

IT: *How is the war affecting the livelihoods and day-to-day survival of ordinary Iranians working people?*

GL: Regime officials have openly stated that over one million jobs were directly and immediately wiped out by US-Israeli strikes and the subsequent closures of the workplaces affected.

Airstrikes have damaged at least 20% of the country's production units, with major steel complexes, petrochemical plants, and manufacturing units hit heavily. Mass-scale redundancies have ensued throughout the country's retail, transport, import-export, and digital sector owing to sharp downturns in business, power outages, the US-enforced blockade in the Gulf of Oman, as well as regime-imposed internet blackouts.

At least two million people are estimated to have been thrown out of work as a direct result of industrial and infrastructural damage as well as major trade disruptions, exacerbating Iran's already huge unemployment crisis. Meanwhile, the regime itself estimates that at least 40% of the Iranian population lives below the official poverty line.

The inhumane US sanctions regime has also added enormous pressure to the Iranian economy as well as invite ominous comparisons with the horrific situation faced by Iraq and its people during the dark days of the 1990s.

However, it should be noted that Iran's economic crisis long predates the war and sanctions and owes in no small part to decades of gross economic mismanagement by the regime, the imposition of neoliberal economic policies since the early 1990s, and eye-watering levels of corruption. The result is a hollowed-out economy that has been rendered acutely vulnerable to sanctions and war conditions, to the detriment first and foremost of the Iranian people.

IT: *How has the war impacted the activity of progressive currents in Iran, such as the trade unions, civil society and the like?*

GL: As I mentioned before, the situation inside Iran has been particularly fraught since the massacre in January.

With the advent just a few weeks later of the US-Israeli war on Iran, the public space in the country was essentially rendered a "ground zero" in terms of protest and indeed any sign of dissent.

There is now a desperate situation in Iran wherein the vast majority of its people and their progressive currents are caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place: a brutal dictatorship unwilling to countenance any notion of the socioeconomic and democratic transformations much needed and sought after by Iranian society; and the very real threat posed by the US and Israel, whose actions have not only led to the killing of thousands of Iranians, the laying to waste of a significant swathe of critical civilian and national infrastructure, but which have served to embolden an even more hardline faction of the regime to come to the fore while the popular movement for democratic change in Iran has been set back catastrophically.

CODIR fully supports those democratic, progressive, and patriotic forces that explicitly and simultaneously reject both foreign interference in Iran as well as the attempts of those regime factions that seek to exploit the continuation of the current situation of "no war, no peace" in order to shore up the dictatorship and head off the calls for democratic change.

IT: *How can global progressive forces effectively support the Iranian people's democratic struggles while opposing foreign imperialism and war?*

GL: It is important to stress at the outset that thede two positions are not only not mutually exclusive, they are in fact symbiotic... They are two sides of the same coin!

The starting point for any principled campaign of solidarity with the Iranian people is the clear demand for an immediate end to the war on Iran, all aggression towards the country, and the swift resumption of proper diplomacy and negotiations.

Campaigners should impress upon their own governments that the war on Iran is as unconscionable and unpopular as it is illegal and that they should firmly resist becoming complicit in it, whether directly or indirectly, including in the granting of permission to the US to use military and air bases on their territory or their airspace en route to attacking Iran.

Coordinated campaigns should be urgently pursued between left and progressive forces, trade unions, civil society, and anti-war movements internationally to oppose the continuation of war, military aggression, and the crippling inhumane sanctions regime against Iran, and defend the Iranian people's inalienable prerogative regarding the course of future developments in their own country.

Such a campaign mounted in tandem with one of principled solidarity with the beleaguered Iranian people and their progressive representative forces, while steadfastly rejecting the blustery, reactionary, and self-serving narrative and rhetoric of the Islamic Republic dictatorship is eminently possible.

A man is shepherded to safety after bombing in Tehran on 3 March

Unions urge PM to stop backing war

UNISON general secretary Andrea Egan (second from right) visits the CODIR stall

CODIR has welcomed a all from trade union leaders representing more than 2.3 million workers for new Prime Minsiter Andy Burnham to take a stand against US-Israeli aggression in Iran.

The 10 union general secretaries wrote to the PM asking him to address the cost of living crisis in Britain by applying pressure on Donald Trump to bring the US-Israeli conflict on Iran to a swift end.

Soon after taking office, Burnham permitted the use of RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire and the Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia to assist the US in their illegal war. They demand he reverses this decision.

Dear Prime Minister,

As trade union leaders, we have seen how the US and Israel's devastating, illegal war on Iran is deepening the cost of living crisis faced by our members and the British public. Disruption to the world's food and energy supplies is hurting communities here in Britain and having a catastrophic impact in the global south.

Since the war started, the average British household has seen its annual energy bill rise by £221, while monthly food bills are forecast to rise by £32.80. Without an end to the war, there will be no end to this cost of living crisis.

We are encouraged by the new government's focus on the cost of living and the measures it is tak- ing to make life more affordable. However, we are deeply concerned that the same government has authorised US air strikes to be conducted from bases on British territories as part of the war against Iran.

Ending rather than escalating this war — which the US and Israel chose to start in violation of the UN charter — is essential for the government's affordability agenda to be a success.

As modelling by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows, the war on Iran has undone the marginal improvements to living standards made since 2024. While broad measures are needed to address the cost of living crisis, de-escalation and an urgent end to the war are essential to preventing bills from surging and averting a systemic shock to the world economy.

The UK has a central role to play in de-escalation: the US has relied on its bases on UK territories to conduct the war, as they are capable of launching strategic bombers and sit within range of Iran.

Revoking permission for the US to use these bases would have a significant impact on the US ability to further escalate a war that has been a catastrophe for people in the Middle East and an economic disaster for the world.

We urge the Prime Minister to vocally and actively oppose the war and to revoke the UK's approval of US air strikes from British territories. Most of the British public oppose these air strikes.

Opposing this war is a necessity if the cost of living agenda is to succeed.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Egan UNISON
Daniel Kebede National Education Union
Dave Ward Communication Workers Union
Eddie Dempsey National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
Fran Heathcote Public and Commercial Services Union
Jo Grady University and College Union
Paul W Fleming Equity
Maryam Eslamdoust Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
Sarah Woolley Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union
Steve Wright Fire Brigades Union

A voice behind bars

Mostafa Tajzadeh's mandate to end executions in Iran

FROM INSIDE Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, prominent reformist turned outspoken dissident Seyyed Mostafa Tajzadeh issued an urgent open letter calling on Iranian authorities to immediately cease the execution of young protesters and political activists. The statement addresses the accelerated pace of hangings following the nationwide demonstrations that erupted in January 2026.

A warning against 'playing with fire'

Tajzadeh's statement, released via his public Telegram account, draws a direct connection between the state's judicial crackdown and a deepening national crisis. Warning that fast-tracked executions of young citizens are "playing with fire," the former deputy interior minister cautioned that hasty, secretive trials risk pushing Iran toward irrecoverable societal collapse, internal conflict, and the "Libyanization" of the state.

Tajzadeh dismantled official arguments that capital punishment serves justice or deters unrest. Key pillars of his declaration include:

- Denunciation of flawed due process: He highlighted that Revolutionary Courts rely on forced confessions, denial of independent legal representation, and expedited proceedings that bypass basic standards of fair trial guarantees.
- Demand for restorative justice: Advocating for a transition away from state retribution, Tajzadeh called for an independent national fact-finding committee to investigate the casualties of the January unrest and stressed that halting executions does not dismiss victims' rights, but protects the broader fabric of society.
- A call for civic unity: He urged Iranians across all political, social, and ideological spectrums to unite in peaceful opposition to capital punishment through legal and civic avenues.

Galvanising the movement against the death penalty

Tajzadeh's intervention carries unique moral authority because of his trajectory from a high-ranking insider within President Mohammad Khatami's administration to an uncompromising political prisoner. His letter has resonated deeply across Iran's fractured opposition and civil society:

- Bridging ideological divides: By framing the abolition of state executions not merely as a human rights issue, but as a practical imperative to prevent national disintegration, Tajzadeh bridged the gap between traditional reformists, radical secularists, and youth movement activists.
- Amplifying prison resistance: The letter provided critical moral backing to the widespread "No to Execution Tuesdays" campaign—a weekly hunger strike movement spreading across dozens of Iranian penitentiaries. Tajzadeh's defiance behind bars underscores the reality that Iranian prisons have transformed into centres of strategic political resistance rather than silence.
- Elevating international pressure: Coming alongside urgent appeals from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, Tajzadeh's statement reinforces international efforts to hold Revolutionary Court judges accountable.

Ultimately, Mostafa Tajzadeh's letter reinforces a growing national consensus among Iranian society: that a state cannot execute its way to stability, and that ending capital punishment is an essential first step toward any peaceful democratic future.

Affiliate to CODIR

Solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people for peace, equality and human rights **starts here**

CODIR supports the campaign for peace, human and democratic rights in Iran. We campaign got the release of all political prisoners and for trade unions to have freedom to organise and campaign effectively. We supply news and analysis of events in Iran and related issues around the world.

Affiliation fees:

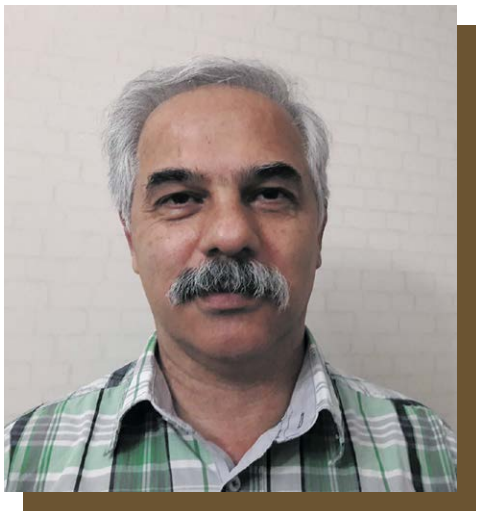
Individual	£20-£50
Local organisations	£20-£50
Regional organisations	£50
National organisations	£100-£250

For information on CODIR, please write to us at: CODIR-BM.CODIR, London, WC1N 3XX, Britain.

Visit us on www.codir.net or email us at codir_info@btinternet.com

War continues to kill workers

Statement from Maziyar Gilaninejad, convenor of the Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics of Iran (UMMI)



THE RAVAGES of the war imposed on Iran from Saturday 28 February 2026, has not only resulted in the literal slaughter of Iranian workers and their children, but through its immediate fuelling of unemployment, has essentially showed workers another face of death...

Many workers returned home empty-handed from their destroyed or indefinitely shuttered workplaces; they are still going without months' worth of arrears and insurance contributions from their employers, meaning they have been left to completely fend for themselves against an unprecedentedly harsh backdrop in Iran. The Islamic Republic's Ministry of Labour has also effectively endorsed this lawlessness and abandonment through its continued silence.

More than 3 million people are believed to have been rendered unemployed as a result of this war and have been forced into selling everything from their wives' jewellery to household appliances, like refrigerators and washing machines. At Mobarakeh Steel and the Mahshahr Petrochemical Complex, in Esfahan and Khuzestan provinces respectively, unemployed workers were even deprived of receiving unemployment insurance compounding their already desperate situations.

For the families of those workers who were martyred during the bombardment, it has taken months for their families to receive due pensions, and of course no one asked the question as to how they survived throughout that time.

Those workers hit by the outbreak of war remain unemployed almost six months later, with no signs of any revival, or attempts to revive, the affected industries. have not been revived, and Any initiative or effort to protest this intolerable situation is met with intimidation and threats, summons to appear before the security forces, and imprisonment.

The situation of women, whether as workers themselves or dependents, and their living conditions is even worse.

While the "hot" of the war may have dissipated for the time being, it nevertheless continues to kill and horrifically impact upon Iran's beleaguered but courageous workers through unprecedented levels of unemployment and sky-high inflation affecting everything from rents; extortionate food prices, including basic staples; and the affordability of much needed medicines, if they can be sourced at all.

No, the war against Iranian workers most certainly goes on!