

“This is nothing but class war”

International support grows for petition to free framed-up Maruti Suzuki workers

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Workers and young people around the world have signed the online petition to demand the freedom of 13 Maruti Suzuki workers in India who have been condemned to life in prison on trumped-up murder charges. The petition drive was initiated by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) after a court in the northern Indian state of Haryana sentenced the men on March 18.

So far over 1,000 people have signed the petition to the Indian government, with many leaving comments denouncing the frame-up and expressing their solidarity with the courageous workers. The signatories are from 33 countries on five continents.

They include workers and young people in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan; railway workers and other workers in France, Italy, the UK and Germany; autoworkers in Ohio and Michigan in the US; signers in Australia and New Zealand; a government worker in Haryana, India and Pasindu Yathindra, the vice treasurer of the Central Bank Employees Union in Sri Lanka.

The petition has been translated into Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, French, Spanish and Turkish, and the ICFI appeal, “Free the framed-up Maruti Suzuki workers!” has also been translated into several European and South Asian languages. A social media video released by the *World Socialist Web Site* earlier this week to publicize the campaign has been watched over 17,000 times.

Much more needs to be done. The Maruti Suzuki workers are victims of a corporate-government vendetta aimed at crushing the resistance of workers to the sweatshop conditions and low wages central to Prime Minister Modi’s “Make in India” campaign. Twelve of the 13 imprisoned workers are leaders of the Maruti Suzuki Workers Union (MSWU), which was formed in rebellion against a company-controlled union and repeated company and state provocations.

The frame-up is the high point of class war against workers in every part of the world. Only by mobilizing the international strength of the working class can this injustice be stopped and the workers released.

There is no time to lose. India’s prison system is a living nightmare, with a prisoner death occurring every five-and-a-half hours, according to a study by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, which calculated that 16,217 prisoners died between 2005 and 2015.

Workers, young people and all defenders of basic democratic

rights should sign the online petition today, share the Facebook video and make this case known as widely as possible.

Below we post a selection of comments from the petition signers.

The judgment of the Indian Court has overlooked the facts and evidence. The case has already destroyed the lives of the workers and families. The right to form unions, equal pay for equal work and right to equality before law still do not exist. The fight for these should continue.

Chennai, India

This travesty sets a precedent for attacks on the entire international working class. To demand the release of these workers is to defend the democratic rights of workers around the world.

Auckland, New Zealand

Toplumsal Esitlik (the Social Equality) group, in political sympathy with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in Turkey, strongly condemns the decision of an Indian court, which has cruelly and vindictively sentenced 13 Maruti Suzuki workers to life imprisonment, and expresses its solidarity with the Maruti Suzuki workers.

We call on workers and youth all over the world to join a Facebook page and participate in the online petition launched by *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) and the ICFI.

Turkey

I’m signing because I stand in solidarity with workers who want a better life and a better future. It takes courage to organize against corporate bosses and the governments they collude with. They deserve our help. I can only imagine what they have had to go through and what they will have to go through. I defend democratic rights!

Hangzhou, China

Solidarietà operaia internazionale (International workers’ solidarity).

Italy

Marxist Voice opposes the brutality of the ruling class and demands immediate release of Maruti Suzuki workers. MV urge to develop the resistance of the working class in Asia and internationally against the rotten capitalist system.

Karachi, Pakistan

This is a complete violation of the democratic rights of these 13 workers—along with workers everywhere. To think that we live in a world where men and women can be persecuted as criminals for speaking out against corruption and fighting for basic decent working conditions. The working class shouldn't stand for this any longer.

These men have done nothing wrong. Why should they be made to serve a life sentence when the heads of the Suzuki corporation can walk free after years of the gross exploitation of these workers?

Australia

Class war in India is the evident and contemptible leftovers from British colonial days. One of the world's richest men lives in a billion-dollar skyscraper in Mumbai, the world's most expensive home. For that parasite to live like that millions of regular people have to be exploited and pushed into abject poverty. Those who rise up are swiftly punished. What happened to these workers is a travesty of justice and needs to be rectified immediately.

North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, US

I own a Suzuki car and motorcycle and am appalled that Suzuki would collude to see men sentenced to life in prison for forming a legitimate union. My replacement vehicles will not be Suzuki.

San Jose, California, US

The outrageous frame-up of the Maruti Suzuki workers is an attack against all workers throughout the world. It is a warning: these are the measures to be used against the international working class. Workers of the world must unite to win the Indian workers' freedom and to oppose brutality and exploitation!

Detroit, Michigan, US

I'm signing because these autoworkers should not be arrested without evidence. This issue is symbolic of much bigger international issues and the ruling is hence significant.

Champaign, Illinois, US

I'm signing because a time comes when one can be only on one of two sides and I choose to be with Maruti workers and workers all over the world.

Kanpur, India

This is a barbarian suppression against the working class of India. We, as the workers and other suppressed masses of Sri Lanka, urge the Indian rulers to free all the imprisoned Maruti Suzuki workers.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Vive la solidarité des travailleurs du monde entier. Ils sont l'avenir de la planète! (Long live the solidarity of the workers of the whole world. They are the future of the planet!)

Paris, France

Free these workers now! Life in jail for opposing the brutality of the auto industry. Workers everywhere must come to their defence!

Australia

This attack on 13 Indian workers is an attack on the entire international working class. Together, the international working class must fight to free these workers and prevent future attacks by fighting the source: capitalism.

Kalamazoo, Michigan, US

Je suis un ouvrier en France. Je soutiens pleinement la campagne

du WWSWS. Je demande de libérer immédiatement les 31 travailleurs de Maruti Suzuki. Il s'agit d'une violation des droits démocratiques. (I am a worker in France. I fully support the WWSWS campaign. I call for the immediate release of the 31 Maruti Suzuki workers. This is a violation of democratic rights).

France

India must re-try these framed political prisoners with international observers present if it is to retain its reputation as a country where the rule of law is above the whims of the multinationals!

France

I believe that people have a right to be treated fairly in the workplace and that governments have a responsibility to the workers to give them a voice.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, US

I stand in solidarity with the Maruti Suzuki workers being falsely persecuted on frame-up charges and intend to fight for democratic rights wherever they are under attack!

Lusaka, Zambia

This is a warning to all workers across the whole subcontinent that the state and political establishment will not hesitate to utilize any and all resources at their disposal in crushing resistance to low wages, precarious contract-labor employment and brutal working conditions imposed by big businesses such as Maruti Suzuki. This is nothing but class war. Workers, youth and all those who stand for democratic rights should come forward to denounce this monstrous act and to build an independent movement based on the enormous power and revolutionary potential of the working class. That is the only viable way to defend social and democratic rights at this juncture.

Kegalle, Sri Lanka

I'm an auto worker and I sympathize with the struggle; it affects us all.

Detroit, Michigan

Alle Arbeiter müssen international zusammenhalten und sich organisieren. Gemeinsam sind wir stark. (All workers need to stick together internationally and to organize. Together we are strong).

Germany

The workers were innocent of the killings and the witnesses' testimony was incoherent. The witnesses were paid by the company. This is just part of a concerted attack on workers to show how investor-friendly India is. These young men were only targeted by the state for their trade union activism. I demand that justice be done for these workers and their families who have suffered long.

Bangalore, India



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wwsws.org/contact