

“It is a frame-up and war on the working class”

Support grows for Maruti Suzuki workers

Our reporters
13 April 2017

It is nearly one month since a judge in the northern Indian state of Haryana condemned 13 autoworkers from the Maruti Suzuki plant in Manesar to life in prison on trumped up murder charges. Four other workers were issued five-year sentences on March 18 after being convicted of lesser charges, which were no less concocted in the company-government conspiracy.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the *World Socialist Web Site* have launched an international campaign and online petition to demand the immediate freedom of these workers whose only “crime” is that they fought against the brutal conditions at the factory, which is owned by the Japan-based transnational corporation Suzuki Motors Corp.

A Hindi version of the Facebook video appeal by the WSWS has been viewed 68,000 times by workers and young people throughout India and internationally. The English-version of the video has also been viewed widely. A French version is also available.

Over the last week campaigners spoke to workers in Chennai, known as “India’s Detroit,” in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The vast industrial belt outside of India’s fourth largest city has seen major class struggles, including the 2010 occupation of the Hyundai factory.

Workers at the ICF (Integral Coach Factory), owned by Indian Railways, and other transport workers denounced the frame-up and called for the freedom of the jailed workers.

In Sri Lanka, the Socialist Equality Party held a successful public meeting in the capital city of Colombo on April 4, the day of international solidarity called by the Maruti Suzuki Workers Union (MSWU). Twelve of the 13 men condemned to life in prison were leaders of the MSWU, which emerged in 2012 after more than a year of militant struggles against the company and its hand-picked puppet union.

Speakers outlined the international significance of the frame-up and denounced the role of the Stalinist parties in India and the trade union affiliates, which have repeatedly isolated and betrayed the Maruti Suzuki workers because of their political support for the Congress Party, which has spearheaded the attack on these workers.

In Germany, supporters of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP-Socialist Equality Party) brought information about the case to an Opel plant in Rüsselsheim, where workers expressed their solidarity with the Indian autoworkers. This followed a similar campaign among Mercedes Benz workers in Stuttgart.

In the United States, the campaign was taken to Amazon workers in Northern California, New York City transit workers, dockworkers in New Orleans, Detroit autoworkers, students at University of Pittsburgh, Eastern Michigan University and other sections of workers and young people.

The Indian state has every intention of letting these workers rot in its notorious jails for the rest of their lives. They are trying to make an example of these workers to prevent any struggle against sweatshop conditions, poverty level wages and precarious contract labor schemes, which are the basis of Modi government’s “Make in India” campaign to attract transnational corporations. At the same time, they want to even further reduce the “bottom,” in the race to the bottom for workers all over the world.

There is no time to lose to defend these courageous class-war prisoners. Make the case known as widely as possible and share the Facebook video and online petition today.

Below we post a sample of comments from those who recently signed the petition.

The Indian Court and Legal System stands accountable for incarcerating these completely innocent 13 working class men, to what represents nothing less than the most painful slow death sentence. These workers should be let free and fully compensated.

JD

Australia

The preconceived and vindictive approach of the Maruti Suzuki management has been established as the law of land by the court in this one-sided judgement. The death of a person from any walk of life is a matter of concern, but convicting the accused without having any proof is not acceptable. They should be released immediately.

SB

India

It is a frame-up and war on the working class.

NW

San Antonio, Texas

This is a complete miscarriage of justice based upon the fallibility of eyewitness evidence, police corruption and a government determined to deny workers their right to organise independent trade unions.

JS

London, UK

I am a Pakistani-American worker, and I stand with the Maruti-Suzuki workers in India. Workers across the world, across all borders, must wage a united struggle against the common enemy—the capitalists of every nation. In India, first and foremost, workers from Pakistan must come to the defense of the Maruti-Suzuki workers against the reactionary national-communist politics which the Pakistani and Indian bourgeoisie use to divide us. Divided we will be

used as cannon fodder in a catastrophic war between India and Pakistan. But united we can fight against their warmongering and attacks on the social rights of workers in both countries. A successful struggle of Pakistani and Indian workers will give an immense impetus to workers everywhere to reject the myriad divisions sown by the bourgeoisie—whether through their right or "left" representatives—and unite in a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system!

UK

Sterling Heights, Michigan, US

We are a group Chilaw urban council workers. Maruti Suzuki workers are our class brothers. Free them all without conditions.

W, M, A

Chilaw

Sri Lanka

No one should be jailed for life for wanting a better life especially under the conditions that prevail in Indian jails.

JP

Modesto, California, US

Stop such injustices by corrupt governments.

JG

Tijuana, Mexico

I believe that workers should be given a fair trial and management's role should be investigated. As in all of India, management normally stoops to a low level to execute their plans.

AS

India

International proletariat solidarity is important for the proletariat revolution. No matter what nation state you are from the working class of other nations is not your enemy.

JM

Detroit, Michigan, US

I hate injustice: and I don't think First World companies and their tame local collaborators should be able to get away with it in Third World countries against their workers.

LK

Newquay, UK

It is not possible to collectively condemn an organization for the death of an individual in midst of confusing facts. It looks like this is a strategy to end the just struggle of the workers.

PT

Pereira, Columbia

These men are my fellow human beings. They deserve to be treated like all human beings should be, with at least a minimal amount of respect. They are not slaves to be overworked and/or mistreated just to fatten the corporate profits.

CE

Alexandria, Louisiana, US

This verdict is the clearest possible indication of class war against the working class. We have to take sides now.

TB

Calcutta, India

This attack on the basic democratic rights of workers is a warning by the rulers of India against the workers: anyone who stands up against the miserable working conditions will be silenced and criminalized before their fight becomes a threat. In the opinion of the rulers the militant workers have already gone too far and they have been answered with brutal oppression and far-reaching reprisals. But the courage to persist of these workers will be the inspiration for millions of others. It will have a politicizing effect. Internationally, workers will solidarize themselves with them. Free the Maruti Suzuki workers!

HW

Germany

We demand the release of the framed-up Maruti Suzuki autoworkers. We know the Maruti frame-up was designed to scare off Indian autoworkers, as well as workers around the world, from their struggle for decent working conditions and pay. We support their continuing struggle.

KA

Detroit, Michigan, US

This is just the prologue of a whole wave of attacks against the organized workers who are ready to resist. It's just tragic. These people are innocent and should therefore be able to return to their families.

SR

Germany

If we let corporations and governments continue to have this kind of control over people in countries like India, how long will it take before it extends to slavery becoming the accepted norm all over the world? If we don't want these conditions in our personal lives, we must take a stand before it takes hold in other countries. Say it loud and say it proud. We will not be slaves to corporate greed, here or anywhere else.

LM

Regina, Canada



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