

Arak Aluminum's Hunger Strike in Iran:

The Working Class's Cry Is a Shot at the Government and Rotten Relations



The workers' strike at one of the Arak Aluminum industrial plants has now lasted 43 days on a hot Wednesday, September 10th. This is an unprecedented strike in Iranian labor history, evolving into both a factory-floor protest and a serious hunger strike. As the company's management, backed by the government and supported by the Islamic authorities, tries to create a climate of fear through lies, complaints, and security accusations, the workers have united in a front driven by hunger but marked by unwavering determination. Dozens of workers, enduring the intense heat, hunger, and thirst on the factory floor, continue to chant:

“The worker dies; he will not accept humiliation!”

We stand, we die, we will defend our rights!

Over 4000 workers at Arak Aluminum protested the management's indifference and the “lying” of the Central Province Labor Department today by going on a hunger strike at the factory grounds, shouting their demands with the following slogans:

- Implementation of the revised job classification plan,
- On-time salary Payment.
- Renovation of worn-out equipment to prevent the factory from closing,
- Adherence to safety standards,
- Ending security harassment and pressure.
- Disposal of the major shareholder Khosulati, who, according to workers, plans to bankrupt the company.

The united and passionate gathering at the company premises, along with the overnight sit-in that lasted until September 10th, showed that this resistance isn't just a local protest but a symbol of the persistence of the Iranian working class. Their demands are precise: immediate attention to legal requirements, ensuring workplace safety, ending corruption and

repression in management and security, and restoring looted wages, salaries, and benefits.

Dry food strike: A pivotal moment in the history of labor movements

The strike by workers in key sectors of the oil and petrochemical industries at the Arak Aluminum Factory, including the only dry food strike in Arak, has now entered its 43rd day as of September 10th, 2025. It is an unprecedented event in the history of the Iranian labor movement.

Aluminum workers, facing an environment where management is attempting to spread fear through lies, complaints, and security accusations, have organized a united protest through hunger and thirst, demonstrating a strong will. Reports indicate that several workers were hospitalized due to unconsciousness caused by hunger, yet on the factory floor, they continue to chant the slogan:

Every labor strike, even though it ostensibly targets the corrupt management of industrial units, actually aims at the entire exploitative system and the rule of systematic corruption and a deadly government. In a situation where society across Iran faces a deep economic, political, and social crisis, every protest by workers, women, and the lower classes, along with cries of resistance against the lack of water, bread, and electricity,

forms a link in a chain of struggle whose ultimate goal is nothing less than the overthrow of the rotten order and the creation of a new one.

Workers' blood, evidence of the crime of the ruling order

Due to privatization policies and corrupt management, many workers have suffered lifelong injuries, and two hardworking individuals, Mahmoud Davoodabadi and Jabbar Abdi, have lost their lives because of unsafe working conditions. This bloodshed highlights the crimes committed by the ruling authorities against the working class and society, reflecting a disregard for human life and a focus on profit and capital accumulation.

Nationwide surge of protests

The Arak aluminum workers' protest is part of a widespread wave that has swept across Iran since 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2022, involving sites like Haft Tappeh, Ahvaz, and Mobarakeh steel plants, as well as sectors such as petrochemicals, oil and gas, teachers, educators, nurses, cleaners, truck drivers, and more. According to reports, in 2023 alone:

- **2,255 protest rallies, 1,377 labor strikes, and 70 other strikes were recorded in Iran.**

These statistics indicate that workers in the oil, gas, petrochemical, steel, and aluminum industries, as well as teachers, retirees, nurses, and female

workers, are uniting and organizing a nationwide strike without a central leadership, instead relying on spontaneous and grassroots networks.

The Crisis of Regime Collapse and Warmongering

Workers die for bread, insurance, and safety, while the Islamic regime consumes billions of dollars of the country's capital in nuclear, missile, and regional war-making projects.

- Construction and maintenance of underground nuclear facilities in Natanz, Fordow, Arak, and Isfahan: estimated costs range from \$30 billion to \$100 billion.
- Direct damages from sanctions over the past fifteen years have surpassed \$1.2 trillion.
- Total costs of nuclear, missile, and proxy wars projects by 2025: between \$2 and \$5 trillion.

Direct results of these policies:

- The fall of the rial from about 9,000 rials per dollar in 2005 to over one million rials in 2025 marks a drastic decline that indicates the actual collapse of the national currency.
- Nearly 70 million people were pushed below the absolute poverty line.

- Rampant inflation and an unprecedented explosion in the cost of living.

Global statistics: missed opportunities

According to precise estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO:

- Building a 200-bed hospital in the Middle East costs between \$50 million and \$100 million. For just \$1 trillion, which is the lowest estimate of the cost of sanctions, 10,000 to 20,000 modern hospitals could be built across Iran.
- The cost of fully vaccinating a child is under \$50 annually. With \$2 trillion, 40 billion children could be vaccinated, potentially impacting multiple generations in Iran and its neighboring countries, as well as globally.
- Building a standard elementary school for 500 students costs between \$2 million and \$5 million. With \$1 trillion, 200,000 to 500,000 schools could be constructed, enough to meet all of Iran's needs and even some in the surrounding region.

Due to privatization policies and corrupt management, dozens of workers have sustained permanent physical injuries, and two hardworking workers, Mahmoud Davoodabadi and Jabbar Abdi, have lost their lives because of unsafe working conditions. This bloodshed exemplifies the crimes

committed by the ruling authorities against the working class and society.

This relationship devalues human life and prioritizes profit and capital accumulation above all else.

- The cost of fully vaccinating a child is less than \$50 per year. With \$2 trillion, 40 billion children could be vaccinated, impacting multiple generations in Iran and neighboring countries, as well as globally.

If even half of these resources were allocated to education and health, Iran could achieve the top tier of the world's most advanced countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) within twenty years. It is now evident that the nuclear project and the Islamic regime have not only drained significant capital but also wasted a historic chance to improve people's lives.

Nuclear and missile projects: They have been a means of survival for the regime.

Since the early 1380s, the Islamic regime has claimed that nuclear and missile efforts are pillars of “deterrence.” However, in reality, these initiatives were not intended to protect the people but focused on regime survival and showmanship.

- **Military exercises in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman include launching Shahab, Qadr, Sajjil, and Khorramshahr missiles, each costing between \$10 million and \$20 million.**
- **Displays alongside nuclear negotiations** to facilitate diplomatic bargaining and buy time.
- **Proxy wars** in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon have cost over \$200 billion from public resources. Meanwhile, the IRGC has transferred missile and drone technology to proxy groups such as the Houthis, Hezbollah, and the Popular Mobilization Forces.

These projects represent two sides of the same coin: a potential nuclear bomb and missile carriers. The outcome has been only sanctions, isolation, and the direct transfer of economic and social costs to those governed, especially workers.

The path to victory and the horizon of freedom is clear:

The revolutionary overthrow of the Islamic government can only happen through the efforts of workers and women who have risen for liberation, in a nationwide movement, a general strike, and by dismantling and disabling the entire repressive, security, and military apparatus of this regime.

Freedom and recognition of human identity, as well as a free life, rely on toppling the Islamic government and establishing council self-management—a new order rooted not in exploitation and inequality but in solidarity, equality, and the collective will of workers, women, and laborers.

Only through councils can we repair and rebuild damaged infrastructure and the environment.

Abbas Mansooran September 10, 2025