

Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Ahmad Meydari
Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare
of the Islamic Republic of Iran
before
114th International Labour Conference
Geneva, 4 June 2026

Distinguished Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Respected colleagues,

The representatives of Iranian workers and employers along with the Iranian State, have decided to participate virtually due to the vast costs imposed by war.

War leaves workers unemployed, tears families apart, renders children orphaned, destroys homes and factories, and contaminates the environment. Yet, the greatest cost of war is the domination of brutality over the human spirit. War is a warning that humanity itself stands at the brink of barbarism.

I have little to add to what I shared when I had the honor of addressing you last year:

Let us return to the Declaration of Philadelphia, which recognizes peace and social justice as the two pillars of the welfare of all humanity, especially workers, and upon which the ILO itself was founded.

I appreciate the ILO's report documenting the crimes committed against children and workers in Gaza. But, we must not limit ourselves only to recording the costs of war; we must strive to prevent war itself.

As I remarked last year, let us learn from the experience of the First and Second World Wars. Wars may begin against oppressed nations, but their flames ultimately engulf everyone. Look at the world today: The President of Venezuela is abducted, while the threat of war looms on Europe's doorstep. Which country has not suffered from the attack on Iran? Which nation's workers remain safe from the fires of war?

European? Asian? or American workers? Indeed, all workers across the world have become hostages to those who profit from the production of weapons. Military capitalism has sacrificed humanity for the sake of weapon producers.

I concluded, and humbly appealed to you, not to remain indifferent. International organizations are not part of Hollywood. The International Labour Organization was established to confront the greatest enemy of workers' interests — war — and it cannot remain silent in the face of those who start it.

It is my duty to thank all the Trade Union who firmly condemn Israel-USA aggression and terrors in Iran. As the Martyred Leader pointed out, “You stay at the right side of history”.

Hence, I respectfully call upon the Director-General of the ILO to convene, next year, a conference dedicated to War and The Workers of The World.

We gather together to discuss the prohibition of child labour. But is the suffering imposed on children by war any less destructive than child labour itself? Let us condemn both as well as discrimination against women. Can decent work — that sacred objective pursued by the ILO — face any obstacle greater than war? In defense of workers' rights across the world and in pursuit of decent work, let us condemn war and use every capacity at our disposal to prevent it.

Last year, I concluded my remarks with words from a Jewish writer and a verse from the Holy Qur'an. I will read those same words once again today, because we need them this year even more than we did last year.

“The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference. The opposite of beauty is not ugliness, it is indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it is indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, but indifference between life and death.”

«وَأَنْتُمْ فِتْنَةٌ لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً...»

از فتنه‌ای بپرهیزید که تنها دامن ظالمان را نمی‌گیرد، بلکه همه را در بر می‌گیرد.

And fear a trial which will be pervasive

We should unify against war

We should unify against war capitalism

We should unify against the worst enemy of humanity

Thank you