

SUPPORT IRAQI OIL WORKERS



Organising over 23,000 workers in Iraq's oil and gas industries, the Federation of Oil Unions in Iraq (IFOU) is struggling against both the US/UK military occupation and the corporate-led privatisation of Iraq's industry.

The forerunner to the IFOU was the Southern Oil Company Union (SOCU), founded in May 2003 by worker activists from the Southern Oil Company. This and other unions from Amara, Basra and Nassiriyah provinces, merged in June 2004 to form the General Union of Oil Employees (GUOE), which has now grown into the IFOU. This union federation remains technically illegal, but President Hassan Jumaa states:

'We take our legitimacy from the workers'

Position on the Occupation

'It is a deep and patriotic feeling of all the union's members that the occupation forces must leave the country **immediately**, whatever the consequences'. Hassan Jumaa: 'Only a mercenary benefiting from the occupation would want it to continue any longer'.

Position on Privatisation

'The privatisation of the oil and industrial sectors is the objective of all in the Iraqi state/government. We will stand firm against this imperialist plan that would hand over Iraq's wealth to international capitalism such that the deprived Iraqi people would not benefit from it...we are taking this path for the sake of Iraq's glory even if it costs us our lives. Iraqis are capable of managing their companies and their investments by themselves'

Position on political Independence

'The GUOE in Basra is an independent union, not linked in the present phase to any [union] confederation.

Position on the previous regime

IFOU executive committee members, including its President, were part of the opposition against Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, and many were imprisoned by the regime. The unions in the federation have an ongoing battle with Ba'ath loyalist managers. The IFOU publicly opposes their continued presence in positions of authority, in particular in the oil industry.

The IFOU needs your solidarity and support

Naftana (Arabic: 'our oil'), is the IFOU's UK support committee. To sign up for our alerts, please send an email to: naftana-subscribe@lists.riseup.net . These are sent every month or so, and keep supporters informed of strikes, and other union activities. If you also send your **mobile phone** number, we will add you to the urgent alerts list, which will be used to mobilise protests in the event of attacks on IFOU members.

See also the federation's home page for regular news updates
www.basraoilunion.org