

EXTERNAL

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Unacknowledged detention / Fear for safety /  
Health concern

5 September 1995

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK, North Korea):

Hwang Sung Kuk, aged 20  
Hwang Sung San, aged 18  
Hwang Sung Chon, aged 16

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The whereabouts of the three brothers named above, forcibly returned to North Korea from the People's Republic of China in June 1995, are unknown. Amnesty International is gravely concerned for their safety and believes that they may be prisoners of conscience. Their forcible return and detention may be connected to their father's public criticism of the human rights situation in North Korea.

Hwang Sung Kuk, Hwang Sung San and Hwang Sung Chon were reportedly summoned to report to the Foreign Affairs Office of the Public Security Bureau in Beijing on 1 June, where they were interrogated for three days. The reasons for this interrogation are not clear. The brothers were reportedly told they could leave the Public Security office after three days, but instead they were sent to the city of Sinuiju, in the north-western part of North Korea. According to one source, the Public Security Office in Beijing summoned the brothers to report to the office on North Korea's request, because of their father's criticism of the human rights situation in North Korea (see below). There has not been any news from the three brothers since they were transported to Sinuiju.

The youngest brother, Hwang Sung Chon, was reportedly suffering from diarrhoea but not given any medication. Amnesty International is concerned about his health.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The brothers were all born in North Korea, but are believed to have no citizenship at present. They were living in Beijing with residence permits issued by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Public Security Bureau in Beijing.

Their father, Hwang Yong Su, was imprisoned in North Korea, possibly as a prisoner of conscience and moved to Beijing in 1992, after his release. In 1994 Mr Hwang visited Japan and gave several interviews and press conferences criticizing the human rights situation in North Korea. During this visit three men, believed to be linked to the North Korean security service, reportedly broke into Mr Hwang's hotel room and threatened him with a knife, telling him not to talk about human rights in North Korea.

North Korea is one of the most closed countries in the world. Amnesty International is concerned that there may be thousands of prisoners held for political reasons in poor conditions and some may have been ill-treated. It is also concerned that the death penalty, including public executions, continues to be used. In May 1995 North Korean officials told Amnesty International that there are a total of 1,000 prisoners in North Korea, including some 240 held for "anti-state" activities.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Korean or your own language:

- urging the authorities to account for the whereabouts of the three brothers, Hwang Sung Kuk, Hwang Sung San and Hwang Sung Chon, and to clarify the reasons for their detention;
- calling for them to be immediately and unconditionally released and allowed to return to the People's Republic of China, unless they are to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences in accordance with international human rights standards;
- seeking assurances that the brothers are being treated in accordance with international standards for the treatment of detainees, and that they have adequate access to medical care and legal representation.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Kim Jong Il

Worker's Party of the DPRK  
Pyongyang

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**Telegrams: Kim Jong Il, Pyongyang, North Korea**

**Salutation: Dear Kim Jong Il**

2) Paek Hak Rim

Ministry of Public Security  
Pyongyang

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**Telegrams: Minister, Public Security, Pyongyang, North Korea**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

3) Mr Pak Dok Hun

Counsellor

The Office of the Permanent Mission of the DPRK to the UN

1 Chemin de Plonjou

1207 Geneva

Switzerland

**Faxes: +41 22 786 0662**

**Salutation: Dear Counsellor**

4) Mr Dak Gil Yon

DPRK Permanent Representative to the UN

515 East 72nd Street, 38-F,

New York

NY 10021, USA

**Faxes: +1 212 772 0735**

**Salutation: Dear Mr Dak Gil Yon**

**COPIES TO:**

Professor Sim Hyong Il

President

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PO Box 49

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Democratic People's Republic of Korea

and to diplomatic representatives of Democratic People's Republic of Korea accredited to your country, if there is one in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 October 1995.