
amnesty international

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (South Korea)

@History Lecturer Arrested Under National Security Law

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Kim Mu-yong, a 34-year-old history lecturer, was arrested on 21 March 1995 under the National Security Law. He is currently in Seoul Prison awaiting trial on charges of possessing and distributing allegedly pro-North Korean material. Amnesty International has adopted Kim Mu-yong as a prisoner of conscience, held for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. It is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Kim Mu-yong is a history lecturer at Bangsong Tongshin University. Police arrested him at his home on 21 March and confiscated a number of his books, pamphlets, cassette tapes and computer diskettes. He was charged under Article 7 of the National Security Law, which provides up to seven years' imprisonment for the act of "praising", "encouraging" or "benefitting" North Korea.

The charges against Kim Mu-yong relate to papers and leaflets he had written which, according to the authorities, glorify the activities of pro-North Korean guerrilla fighters before and during the Korean War (1950 to 1953). As a history lecturer, he had written material about this period, with special emphasis on the activities of guerrilla fighters. He had issued a leaflet to accompany a guided tour to areas where they used to operate, in North Cholla and South Kyungsang Provinces. The leaflet, entitled "modern Korean history and the guerrilla movement", apparently included an itinerary and historical information. He had also published a paper entitled "post-liberation history of the guerrilla struggle" at a lecture he gave almost two years ago.

Article 7 of the National Security Law is often used to arrest people on charges of forming or belonging to leftist groups and of disseminating material alleged to be

pro-North Korean. Dozens were arrested under this provision of the law during 1994 and early 1995. Some were sentenced to short prison terms while others were given suspended prison sentences and released. Amnesty International welcomed a court decision of 6 April 1995 in which a high court judge took the unusual step of acquitting Lee Chang-bok, who had been sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment under Article 7 of the National Security Law. The judge is reported to have said that "freedom of ideology and expression must be ensured" and that the mere fact of having similar views to those of North Korea, without use or advocacy of violence, did not justify prosecution under the National Security Law.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the South Korean Government to amend several provisions of the National Security Law which may be used to punish the non-violent exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and association. In May 1995 there were some 370 political prisoners in South Korea, over 80% of whom were held under the National Security Law. Many were considered by Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send letters and faxes:

- ◆ *Expressing concern about the arrest of Kim Mu-yong under Article 7 of the National Security Law for the non-violent exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association;*
- ◆ *Calling for his immediate and unconditional release.*

Appeals to:

- ◆ *President Kim Youngsam*
The Blue House, 1 Sejong-no, Chongno-gu, Seoul
Republic of Korea
Fax: +822 770 0253
- ◆ *Mr Ahn Woo-man, Minister of Justice*
Ministry of Justice
1 Chungangdong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province
Republic of Korea
Fax: +822 504 3337
- ◆ *and to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country.*

This appeal has been sent to all South Korea action files groups for action. Please check with the IS if sending appeals after 30 June 1995.

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / ACADEMICS / CENSORSHIP /

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