
amnesty international

£SOUTH KOREA @Long-Term Prisoner Yu Chong-sik

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Yu Chong-sik, aged 53, has already served 18 years of a life sentence under the National Security Law. Amnesty International believes that Yu Chong-sik may be a prisoner of conscience, convicted on the basis of a confession obtained under torture. It is urging the newly-elected government in South Korea to review his case as a matter of urgency.

Yu Chong-sik was arrested on 2 March 1975 by officials of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA). He was accused of making two trips to North Korea where he allegedly received espionage training. Human rights groups in South Korea and members of his family say that the charges against him were fabricated and that he was tortured during interrogation. His case is similar to that of many other political prisoners sentenced to lengthy prison terms during the 1970s and 1980s and whose convictions appear to have been made on the basis of a confession obtained under torture.

In July 1975 Yu Chong-sik was sentenced to death by Seoul District Court on charges of espionage. He appealed to the High Court which commuted his sentence to life imprisonment in November 1975. He is currently held in Andong Prison and is said to be suffering from neuralgia and infection of the middle ear.

Yu Chong-sik was born in 1940 in Japan. He lived there until the age of five when his family moved to the city of Pusan in South Korea. He studied at Kon Kuk University in Seoul and in the early 1960s went to Japan to study agriculture in at the University of Nihon

and then at the University of Tokyo. While he was living in Japan he visited North Korea twice, but claims to have done so merely out of curiosity. He returned to South Korea in 1970, married and had two children. He initially worked for the Japan Trade Promotion Association in Seoul and then became an art dealer.

In February 1993 a new government took office in South Korea. President Kim Young-sam promised that in future justice would "flow like a river" and his government embarked on a program of reform, including the investigation of past corruption. In spite of its promise of greater freedom and democracy, the government has so far failed to investigate the cases of long-term political prisoners like Yu Chong-sik.

Please send appeals to the South Korean Government,

- expressing concern that Yu Chong-sik may be a prisoner of conscience, convicted after an unfair trial on the basis of a confession obtained under torture;
- urging the authorities to review the case of Yu Chong-sik as a matter of urgency:
- reminding the government that its investigation of past abuse should include the cases of long-term political prisoners who are alleged to have been convicted on the basis of a confession obtained under torture.

Appeals to:

Mr Kim Doo-hee, Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province,
Republic of Korea.
Fax: +82 2 504 3337.

President Kim Young-sam
The Blue House
1 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu
Seoul
Republic of Korea
Fax: c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs: +82 2 720 2686

Copies to:

Diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT / BUSINESS PEOPLE /

*ILL-HEALTH / CONFESSIONS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / POLITICAL PRISONERS / POLITICALLY
MOTIVATED CRIMINAL CHARGES / ESPIONAGE /*

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