

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 25/41/90

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**MEDICAL CONCERN**

**CONTINUED DETENTION OF KIM CHIN-YOP  
REPUBLIC OF [SOUTH] KOREA**

Amnesty International is appealing for the release of Kim Chin-yop, an adopted prisoner of conscience who was arrested by officers of the Agency for National Security Planning on 2 September 1989. He is a 25-year-old dentist who was head of the dental clinic at a hospital in Pusan, an industrial city on the south-east coast. Kim Chin-yop has been convicted of having helped to arrange for a member of the National Council of Student Representatives (Chondaehyop) to enter North Korea to attend a youth festival held there in the first week of July 1989.

BACKGROUND

Since the Korean war of the early 1950s and the subsequent division of Korea into two states, there have been periodic talks between the two governments about reunification, but with each state setting different terms and with almost all contact between nationals of the two countries remaining prohibited. Any visit to, or unauthorized contact with, North Korea can incur heavy penalties for South Koreans under the National Security Law.

In January 1989 the South Korean authorities set up a Committee to Promote South-North Student Exchanges and were considering sending an official student delegation to the youth festival. In the event, however, the North Korean authorities sent invitations only to members of Chondaehyop and the South Korean Minister of Education issued a statement denouncing the festival as part of a communist propaganda campaign and banned all student organizations from participating in it.

Students who attempted to cross into North Korea for the festival were arrested. One 22-year-old student, Miss Im Su-kyong, however, managed to reach North Korea via Japan and West Germany. Once in Pyongyang she made a number of statements calling for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula and was immediately arrested when she re-crossed the border into South Korea. A number of people who helped to arrange her visit to the north were also arrested.

According to reports, Kim Chin-yop met the chairman of Chondaehyop's policy-making committee in mid-June 1989 and discussed with him the attendance of Chondaehyop's representatives at the youth festival in Pyongyang. According to the authorities, Kim Chin-yop then wrote a letter to Koreans in West Germany who are said to have close contacts with North Korea, asking them to help Im Su-kyong with her travel arrangements to go to North Korea.

On 20 February 1989, Kim Chin-yop was sentenced to two years' imprisonment by the Seoul District Court on charges of espionage. He was accused of aiding Im Su-kyong's visit to North Korea under instructions from North Korea. Kim Chin-yop admitted that he had discussed Im Su-kyong's visit with student leaders

but that he had done so of his own volition and because of his support for reunification of the Korean peninsula. His sentence was reduced on appeal to 18 months' imprisonment by the Seoul High Court. At this trial the judge accepted that Kim Chin-yop had not acted on instructions from North Korea but "out of the kindness of his heart", and acquitted him of espionage. The conviction of helping Im Su-kyong go to North Korea was upheld. Kim Chin-yop is appealing against his sentence to the Supreme Court.

Kim Chin-yop is an Australian citizen whose family left South Korea in 1976 when he was 11-years-old. He studied dentistry at the University of Sydney and after graduating in 1986 worked at the Westmead Hospital, one of the city's major public hospitals. In April 1989 he was sent to South Korea by the World Mission Committee of the Uniting Church in Australia and took up the post of head of the dental clinic of the Comprehensive Maternal-Child Health Centre of the Ilshin Hospital in Pusan, a major port and industrial city on the south-eastern coast. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

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To : Medical professionals

From: Medical Office / Research Department - Asia

Date: 4 September 1990

**FOLLOW-UP TO MEDICAL LETTER-WRITING ACTION**  
**(See ASA 25/32/90 - 11 October 1989)**

**KIM Chin-yop**  
**REPUBLIC OF [SOUTH] KOREA**

Further appeals are requested on behalf of Kim Chin-yop, a 25-year-old dentist who is adopted as a prisoner of conscience. Please see the details attached. Letters should

- (if appropriate) note that you have written previously on Kim Chin-yop's behalf following his imprisonment in September 1989 on charges related to helping a South Korean student to visit North Korea
- express regret that Kim Chin-yop remains in detention despite the High Court judge's ruling that his help towards getting Im Su-kyong to North Korea could not be considered as espionage.
- express hope that he will be promptly and unconditionally released.

Groups should also try to involve dentists and dental associations in appeals.

ADDRESSES

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