

UA 249/95

Executions / Fear of further executions

2 November 1995

## REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)

Bae Jin-sun, aged 22  
Chi Jun-gil, aged 27  
Chong Yong-bok, aged 38  
Kang Dong-un, aged 23  
Kang Mun-sok, aged 24  
Kim Hyon-yang, aged 23  
Kim Dong-sik, aged 31  
Kim Chol-oh, aged 23  
Kim Ki-hwan, aged 27  
Lee Du-kyun  
Lee Ho-sung  
Lee Keun-ho, aged 43  
Mun Sang-rok, aged 24  
Paek Pyong-ok  
Park Sung-kyu, aged 29  
Soh Hyuk-bin, aged 33  
Shin Min-chul, aged 34  
Song Jong-ho aged 34  
Un Po-hyun, aged 38

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At 8am on 2 November 1995, 19 executions were carried out in secret at prisons in Seoul, Taegu, Pusan and Kwangju. In line with its usual policy, the South Korean authorities did not give any warning of the executions. There are fears that further executions may be imminent.

The executed prisoners had all been convicted of murder. They included Kim Chol-oh who was aged 19 at the time of his arrest and claims to have been beaten during police interrogation. Amnesty International had expressed concern that his trial may have been unfair. Six of those executed had been sentenced to death in October 1994, 25 days after they were first charged.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, considering it to be the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment. It is further concerned that some prisoners under sentence of death may not have had a fair trial.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Executions are carried out by hanging, on order of the Minister of Justice. The death penalty is provided in law for a range of offences. Before these latest executions there were some 50 prisoners under sentence of death, all convicted of murder.

Prisoners under sentence of death live in perpetual fear that they may be executed at any time. Prisoners are not told of their impending execution until the day it is due to take place. No public announcement is made in advance, neither are families informed. Some prisoners under sentence of death are held in handcuffs for 24 hours a day, to prevent suicide or escape.

The number of executions in South Korea has increased over the past few years. There were no executions in 1993 and 15 executions in 1994.

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

- expressing deep concern about the execution of 19 prisoners on 2 November;

- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment; while expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their relatives, pointing out that the death penalty is often inflicted on those least able to defend themselves, that it is irreversible, is shown to have no special deterrent effect, and may be inflicted on the innocent;
- urging the government to ensure that no further executions take place, that all death sentences are commuted and that steps are taken to abolish the death penalty in law.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President Kim Young-sam

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**Telegrams: President Kim Young-sam, Seoul, Republic of Korea**

**Salutation: Dear President**

2) Minister of Justice

Mr Ahn Woo-man

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**Telegrams: Justice Minister Ahn, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province, South Korea**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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and to diplomatic representatives of Republic of Korea (South Korea) accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 December 1995.