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£SOUTH KOREA

@Appeal on Behalf of Socialist Poet Park No-hae

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Park No-hae, a 35-year-old poet and alleged leader of *Sanomaeng* (Socialist Workers' League), is serving a life sentence under the National Security Law (NSL) for "anti-state" activities. Park No-hae was reportedly tortured and ill-treated during interrogation and denied access to his lawyers. Amnesty International is seeking further information about the evidence used to convict him as it believes he may have been tried unfairly and that he may be a prisoner of conscience.

Park No-hae was arrested on 10 March 1991 and interrogated for over 20 days by the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP). He was allowed to meet his lawyer just once during this interrogation period and described to him how he had been beaten on three occasions by a group of some 13 men. He said that he had been denied sleep for the first two days of interrogation and only allowed a few hours of sleep on subsequent days. He is said to have attempted suicide as a result of the beatings by cutting his wrist with a piece of broken mirror. Amnesty International has received many reports of restrictions on access to lawyers and ill-treatment by the ANSP and believes that the agency's powers to arrest and detain suspects should be suspended until effective measures to protect the rights of detainees are introduced.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture raised the case of Park No-hae with the South Korean Government in August 1991. In November 1991 the South Korean Government replied saying that the court had rejected the complaint of ill-treatment but giving no information about the nature of the investigation that was carried out. It is believed that this refers to complaints of torture made during Park No-hae's trial and that no independent criminal investigation was conducted by the prosecution authorities. Amnesty International is

concerned that the prosecution authorities have consistently failed to conduct adequate investigations into reports of torture and ill-treatment. It is urging the government to demonstrate its commitment to the eradication of torture by ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The prosecution asked for the death sentence. In September 1991 Park No-hae was sentenced to life imprisonment under the NSL on charges of establishing and leading an "anti-state" organization and this sentence was subsequently upheld by two appeal courts. The NSL provides for long sentences or the death penalty for leaders of "anti-state" groups and has frequently been used to imprison those with socialist or communist political views and those who expressed support for North Korea or whose ideas were deemed those espoused by the government of North Korea.

Sanomaeng was established in 1989 and is said to have several thousand members. Since September 1990 some 180 of its members have been arrested, of whom some 100 remain in prison today. The authorities said that *Sanomaeng* members had links with the North Korean Workers Party and accused its members of working on university campuses and in factories preparing for an armed uprising to overthrow the government. *Sanomaeng* members and supporters have denied these accusations, claiming that *Sanomaeng* is merely an organization with a socialist orientation which seeks political representation for the working class. It organized mass rallies, distributed information and also sent members to work with farmers and manual workers in order to educate them about their political rights.

Park No-hae is a well-known poet whose work is characterised by its harsh realism and criticism of government policy. His first collection of poems, entitled *Dawn of Labour*, was published in 1984 and sold over one million copies. Park No-hae is held in Kyongju Prison. His wife, Kim Chin-ju, was also arrested in this case and has been sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

Please write appeals to the Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, 1 Chungang-dong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea (fax: +82 2 504 3337).

- Urging the authorities to conduct an immediate and impartial inquiry into claims that Park No-hae was tortured during interrogation and to make its findings public.
- Urging the authorities to suspend the ANSP's powers to arrest and detain suspects until effective measures to protect the rights of detainees are introduced.
- Urging the Government to demonstrate its commitment to the eradication of torture through early ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Asking for detailed information about the evidence that Park No-hae advocated the use of violence and urging the authorities to release him if he is held for the peaceful expression of his political views.

**KEYWORDS: WRITERS / POLITICAL ACTIVISTS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION /
LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT /**

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