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# *amnesty international*

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## £SOUTH KOREA

### @Urgent appeal for the release of Professor Cho Guk

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Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Professor Cho Guk who was arrested 23 June 1993 under the National Security Law. The organization believes that Professor Cho Guk is held solely for the non-violent exercise of his rights of freedom of expression and association and has adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.

Professor Cho Guk, aged 29, is a lecturer of law at Ulsan University. He is a well-known and highly regarded legal scholar who has published a number of research papers, articles and books on topics such as Marxist legal theory, criminal jurisprudence and freedom of thought. He has been openly critical of the National Security Law, the very law under which he is now held. He is also a member of the Democratic Legal Studies Association and Chairperson of the Committee for Progressive Social Reform.

On 23 June 1993 Professor Cho Guk was arrested by officers of the Security Division of the National Police Administration. A warrant for his arrest was not issued until two days later, on 25 June. He was held by the police until 12 July when his case was transferred to the prosecution where he is currently being questioned. Prisoners arrested under the National Security Law may be held for up to 50 days before they are formally charged, a period which Amnesty International considers to be excessive.

Professor Cho Guk and several colleagues are accused of establishing or belonging to the Social Science Academy which the authorities appear to have labelled as an "anti-state" organization, linked to *Sanomaeng* (Socialist Workers' League). Members of *Sanomaeng* have faced arrest and imprisonment since 1990 and its leaders are currently

serving life terms. The National Security Law imposes lengthy prison terms or the death penalty for vaguely-defined "anti-state" and pro-North Korean activities. It has been used frequently to curtail the activities of socialist organizations and other government critics on the pretext that they pose a threat to state security.

Amnesty International understands that the Social Science Academy was merely a small study group, established in June 1991 and disbanded in early 1992. Over the short period of its existence it published several short leaflets entitled *Our Thought*. Professor Cho Guk was apparently not a member of the Academy although he did help to edit one of its leaflets.

The arrest of Professor Cho Guk has provoked much concern in South Korea among human rights groups and academics and a support committee has been established to campaign for his release. Amnesty International also believes that the arrest of Professor Cho Guk is a violation of his rights of freedom of expression and association and that he should be freed immediately.

***ACTION - WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PROFESSOR CHO GUK:***

- Write to the Minister of Justice and the President seeking the immediate and unconditional release of Professor Cho Guk; send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country;
- Encourage others to send appeals;
- Contact professional groups and others in your country and urge them to take up the case of Professor Cho Guk.

***Send 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

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET,  
LONDON WC1X 8DJ, UNITED KINGDOM

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