

---

# *amnesty international*

---

## £SOUTH KOREA

### @Appeal on behalf of Ham Ju-myong

**AUGUST 1992**

**AI INDEX: ASA 25/21/92**

**DISTR: SC/CO/GR**

Ham Ju-myong was arrested in 1983 and sentenced to life imprisonment for alleged espionage activities on behalf of North Korea. He has already served nine years of his sentence and is currently held in Chonju Prison. Amnesty International believes that Ham Ju-myong may have been convicted after an unfair trial, on the basis of a confession obtained under torture. It is urging the South Korean authorities to review his case.

Ham Ju-myong was born in 1933 in what is now North Korea. In 1952, during the Korean War, he followed his family to the South and gave himself up to the US Forces (which were the main component of the United Nations forces which had come to assist the Republic of Korea). Ham Ju-myong settled in South Korea where he set up a small café and sub-contracting company. He remained under observation by the South Korean authorities until 1968 when he was informed that the surveillance would be lifted.

On 18 February 1983 Ham Ju-myong was arrested and charged under the National Security Law with passing information to a woman in North Korea, whom he allegedly married between 1950 and 1952, and receiving payment from the North Korean authorities. In May 1984 he was convicted of espionage and sentenced to life imprisonment. His sentence was later upheld by the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Ham Ju-myong claims that he was severely tortured for some 60 days after his arrest and that he was forced to sign a false confession. He said that he was deprived of sleep for 10-15 days, that electric shocks were applied to his hands and feet and that he was repeatedly submerged under water, hung upside-down and strapped to a board and beaten. In an appeal to the courts Ham Ju-myong wrote:

"They told me to tell them about my combat experience, but I did not know what they were talking about. I told them truthfully that after I was released in 1954 I was reunited with my family and I did not perform any espionage activities, that I was merely working hard and minding my own business. . . .

"After that they said that I must have communicated with North Korea through a newspaper advertisement, and the torture was resumed. . . . Because I could not stand the torture, I falsely testified that I placed an ad . . .

"When I was drained and weak, they brought warm salty water . . . . Under this dreadful torture, where are justice and truth? I eventually started making false statements again".

Ham Ju-myong's wife did not know what had happened to her husband until one week after his arrest when the family home was searched. She did not see her husband until three months after his arrest when she noticed that his face was swollen and he appeared to be in pain. During his trial in May 1983 Ham Ju-myong denied the charges against him. Several friends who were called to give evidence were reportedly intimidated by the authorities into saying that he was a communist.

Amnesty International has written to the South Korean authorities about the cases of some 25 political prisoners who are serving lengthy prison terms on charges of espionage after visiting North Korea, meeting members of pro-North Korean groups in Japan or contacting relatives in North Korea. Many of these prisoners were convicted under previous governments after trials which appear not to have met international standards for a fair trial.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Please write appeals to the South Korean Minister of Justice expressing concern that Ham Ju-myong may have been convicted after an unfair trial and urging the authorities to review his case.

Address: Mr Kim Ki-choon, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, 1 Chungang-dong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information about long-term political prisoners in South Korea, see the following Amnesty International documents: *South Korea, Prisoners Held for National Security Offences* (ASA 25/25/91); *South Korea, Amnesty International's Concerns* (ASA 25/14/92).

<p><b>KEYWORDS:</b> LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT / TRIALS / CONFESSIONS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION / PRISONERS' TESTIMONIES / POLITICAL PRISONERS / BUSINESS PEOPLE / ESPIONAGE /</p>
--

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