

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 237/94 (ASA 25/23/94, 17 June 1994) and follow-ups (ASA 25/34/94, 23 November; ASA 25/35/94, 1 December) - Mass arrests / Fear of ill-treatment / Prisoner of conscience faces possible death sentence

SOUTH KOREA Ahn Jae-ku, aged 61, former professor of mathematics

Amnesty International has received a letter, dated 11 December 1994, from Ahn So yung, who is the daughter of Ahn Jae-ku. Here are some extracts:

"I am writing to thank you on behalf of my father, Ahn Jae-ku, who was arrested in connection to the 'National Front for Salvation of the Fatherland' case.

As you are well aware, my father was sentenced to life imprisonment on 30 November...

Two hours after the prosecution demanded the death penalty for my father, he was handcuffed and was forced to wear these handcuffs 24 hours a day. Later, he was barely able to stretch his body from lack of exercise. I cannot help but think that such harsh treatment imposed on a man over sixty virtually amounts to a form of torture...

...my father is still being treated discriminatorily. Although his sentence has not been finalized and he still remains an unconvicted prisoner, my father was placed in Youngdungpo Prison, a prison for the convicted, and is kept isolated from other prisoners. At present there are only 2 or 3 prisoners of conscience at Youngdungpo, compared to the several tens or hundreds in other detention centers: in this manner, the few prisoners of conscience are subject to more unfair treatments. For example, although prison rules stipulate that newspapers and magazines are allowed for reading, it is a customary practice for prison authorities to cut out any articles they do not like, particularly articles related to politics. Also, prisoners are allowed visits from anyone, but my father's case is an exception: he is only permitted to meet with his family. Right now, suffering from arthritis and rheumatism, he is left alone and neglected in a damp room where water seeps out through the cracks of the walls. His entire body is swelling and his health is rapidly deteriorating.

The warm concern you have shown for my father and others involved in the same case have consoled my family and others'. My father has especially asked me to convey his message of thanks to you all, and says that your devotion and efforts have helped imbue him with a sense of strength...

I am sincerely grateful to you all: I cannot fully express how much your concern and efforts have been the source of strength and courage for us. Wishing that Amnesty International will continue to progress well into the future, I will end my letter here. Please be well."

Amnesty International continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Ahn Jae-ku as a prisoner of conscience.

No further action by the Urgent Action Network is requested. Thank you to all who sent appeals on behalf of Ahn Jae-ku.