

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of ill-treatment / Legal concern

17 February 1995

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)

Kim Su-wook (27)

Lee Jae-ho (25)

Lee Chong-bum (26)

Lee Jung-min (25)

Hwang Jin-su (26)

Cho Chang-rae (24)

and two other student activists

Eight former student activists, arrested on 12, 13 and 14 February, have been denied access to lawyers and family since their arrest. Amnesty International fears they may be ill-treated and coerced into making incriminating "confessions". Furthermore, it believes they may be prisoners of conscience, held for their non-violent political activities.

The eight were doing military service (compulsory in South Korea). They were arrested by the Military Security Command and are currently held for interrogation at its headquarters in Seoul. Four have been held since 12 February. On 16 February a lawyer who tried to gain access to the prisoners was reportedly told by police officials that their interrogation, throughout the day and the night, could not be interrupted. Family members were apparently told that they were only entitled to meet the prisoners on the first and third Friday of the month.

The prisoners are held under Article 7 of National Security Law and are believed to be accused of establishing a pro-North Korean organization called *Chajudaehoh* (independence group) while they were studying at Pusan University. Five students at Pusan University have also been arrested in connection with this case and are currently held at Pusan police station.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Political detainees in South Korea are frequently subjected to sleep deprivation, threats and other coercion in order to force them to sign a "confession". Some are beaten. Under the National Security Law they may be questioned by the police for up to 20 days.

Article 7 of the National Security Law punishes the act of "praising", "encouraging" or "benefitting" North Korea. During 1994 dozens of people were arrested under Article 7 of the National Security Law, mostly on charges of forming or belonging to left-wing groups and of disseminating material alleged to be pro-North Korean. Many were considered by Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience, held in violation of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- Expressing concern that the prisoners (please name some or all) have been denied access to their lawyers since their arrests between 12 and 14 February;
- calling for the prisoners to given immediate access to lawyers and seeking assurances that their treatment during police questioning conforms to international human rights standards;
- Expressing concern that they may be prisoners of conscience, held for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

APPEALS TO

1) Director, Military Security Command

Ministry of National Defence
3-1 Youngsan-dong, Yongsan-ku
Seoul

Republic of Korea

Telegrams: Director, Military Security Command, Seoul, South Korea

Faxes: +822 720 2686 (via Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Mr Ahn Woo-mahn, Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

1 Chungang-dong

Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun

Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea

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

Telexes: 24757 MOJUST K

Faxes: +822 504 3337

Salutation: Dear Minister Kim

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Daily Editor, Hankyoreh Daily

1-2 Yangpyeong-dong 2-ka

Seoul, Republic of Korea

2) Daily Human Rights News

Sarangbang, 3/F Choyang Bldg, 71-12 Galwoldong

Yongsangu, Seoul 140-150

Republic of Korea

and to diplomatic representatives of the 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 1 April 1995.