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£SOUTH KOREA

@Ill-treatment of Prisoner of Conscience Park Seok-jin

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Park Seok-jin, a prisoner of conscience serving an 18-month prison sentence for "desertion" because he opposes some forms of military service, has been removed to a punishment cell in Yongdungpo Prison, after being beaten by prison guards and tied up for 48 hours. According to his relatives, the prison authorities have imposed a one-month term of close confinement against Park Seok-jin because he showed "disrespect" to the director of the prison during an inspection on 19 January 1994. He had reportedly failed to stand to attention when the director entered his cell. According to his family, Park Seok-jin is now denied access to some visitors, cannot obtain any reading material, and is unable to exercise.

On 19 January, according to his lawyer, Park Seok-jin was beaten, tied with rope and ankle chains and put into a small "punishment" cell for 48 hours. He is now believed still to be in a punishment cell, but the rope and ankle chain have reportedly been removed.

Park Seok-jin was arrested in July 1993 and sentenced to one-and-a-half years' imprisonment for deserting after he had made a "declaration of conscience". The "declaration" expressed his objection to completing his compulsory military service as a riot policeman, a duty which forced him to suppress civilian demonstrations. Amnesty International is calling for his release as it believes that he is held for peacefully expressing his views and that the right to perform an alternative civilian service should be made available to those who, for reasons of conscience, are not willing to perform military service.

Amnesty International believes that the imposition of a term of close confinement on Park Seok-jin for showing "disrespect" to the director of Yongdungpo Prison, and the use of rope and chains to tie him up for 48 hours, could amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, prohibited under international human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by South Korea. Article 33 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that "*Instruments*

of restraint, such as handcuffs, chains, irons and strait-jackets, shall never be applied as a punishment." The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners provide strict limits on punishment by close confinement and specify that such punishment may be carried out only under daily supervision by a medical officer.

Amnesty International has received other reports of political prisoners being subjected to such punishment. For example, in May 1993, prisoner of conscience Baik Tae-ung was apparently tied up and put in a small cell for 24 hours because he had protested about poor food. Amnesty International is concerned that South Korean prison regulations and laws do not protect prisoners from all forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. The organization is calling on the South Korean Government to end the confinement of Park Seok-jin and to ensure that no prisoner is punished in ways not consistent with international standards for the treatment of prisoners. Amnesty International reiterates its view that Park Seok-jin is a prisoner of conscience and renews its call on the South Korean Government to release him immediately and unconditionally.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: please send letters and faxes:

- ◆ *urging the South Korean Government to end the confinement of Park Seok-jin in a punishment cell;*
- ◆ *expressing concern at reports that Park Seok-jin was beaten and tied with rope and ankle chains for 48 hours, in contravention of international human rights standards;*
- ◆ *calling for Park Seok-jin's immediate and unconditional release.*

Appeals to:

- ◆ Mr Kim Doo-hee, Minister of Justice

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1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province
Republic of Korea

Fax: +822 504 3337

- ◆ Mr Lee Hoi Chang, Prime Minister

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- ◆ Director, Yongdungpo Prison

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- ◆ and to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country.

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT1 / CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS / RESTRAINTS / PRISON STAFF /