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£SOUTH KOREA

@Appeal to the new President

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On 25 February 1993 Kim Young-sam was elected President of the Republic of Korea and in his inaugural speech he declared his intention to promote a new, freer and more democratic society. On 6 March the new government announced an amnesty for prisoners and former prisoners and some 2000 prisoners were released, including 144 political prisoners. Amnesty International welcomes President Kim Young-sam's promise of a more democratic society and the release of a number of political prisoners. However, it is concerned that there remain some 400 political prisoners, including prisoners held for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Amnesty International is urging the new government to demonstrate its stated commitment to increased democracy by releasing all prisoners of conscience, reviewing the cases of prisoners said to have been convicted on the basis of convictions obtained under torture, amending laws which restrict the rights of freedom of expression and association and taking measures to protect the basic rights of detainees. It believes the new government should take the following steps as a matter of urgency:

Release all prisoners of conscience: All prisoners held solely for the non-violent exercise of their rights of freedom of expression and association should be unconditionally released. They include Kim Song-man and Hwang Tae-kwon, both serving lengthy sentences under the National Security Law on charges of "espionage" which Amnesty International believe are unsubstantiated. They also include Suh Kyung-won, convicted under the National Security Law of making an unauthorized visit to North Korea and his secretary Pang Yang-kyun who was accused of failing to report the visit. They and other prisoners of conscience were not included in the amnesty.

Review the convictions of long-term political prisoners: For many years Amnesty International has been seeking a review of the cases of political prisoners convicted in previous decades on the basis of confessions they say were extracted under torture. They include Park Dong-oon and Ham Ju-myong, arrested in 1981 and 1983 under the National Security Law and sentenced to life imprisonment. Both claim to have been held incommunicado for weeks and forced to confess under torture. For many years the cases of these many other long-term political prisoners appear to have been overlooked by the authorities.

Amend the National Security Law: Amnesty International believes that President Kim Young-sam's promise of greater freedom and democracy entails a necessary revision of the National Security Law which punishes "anti-state" activities and contacts with "anti-state" organizations (including North Korea) and the very broadly defined crime of "espionage". The National Security Law has been used for many years to imprison those who disagree with government policy or those who express sympathy for North Korean or socialist positions. Amnesty International believes it should be amended so as to remove from its scope the provisions which punish non-violent political activities with imprisonment or the death sentence.

Protect the basic rights of detainees: Amnesty International receives frequent reports of illegal arrests, restrictions on access to lawyers and reports of ill-treatment by the Agency for National Security Planning. It was particularly critical of the Agency's treatment of some 60 political prisoners arrested in August and September 1992 for alleged "spying" activities, including Kim Nak-jung, Chang Ki-pyo, Song Hae-suk and many others. The new government has promised to reform the Agency, through curbing its political activity and limiting its investigative activities to cases of "espionage". However, Amnesty International believes the Agency's powers of arrest and interrogation should be suspended in all cases until effective measures are introduced to protect the basic rights of detainees, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Please send appeals to President Kim Young-sam urging his government to:

- **Release** prisoners held for the non-violent exercise of their rights of freedom of expression and association;
- **Review** the cases of long-term political prisoners whose convictions are said to be based on confessions obtained under torture;
- **Amend** the National Security Law, removing provisions which punish non-violent political activities with imprisonment and the death sentence;
- **Introduce** effective measures to protect the basic rights of detainees, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Write to: President Kim Young-sam, The Blue House, 1 Sejong-no, Chongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea. (Fax, via Ministry of Foreign Affairs: +82 2 720 2686)



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