
amnesty *international*

£SOUTH KOREA

@Appeal for the Release of three Publishers

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Amnesty International is calling for the release of three publishers arrested in March 1994 under the National Security Law. Kim Yon-in is the owner of *Heem* Publishing Company; Lee Song-woo and Kim Byong-hak are the owner and managing director of *Ilbit* Publishing Company. Amnesty International believes that these three men are prisoners of conscience held for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression and that they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Kim Yon-in was arrested on 23 March by some 15 police officers and taken to Namdaemun police station for questioning. A warrant for his arrest was not issued until 24 March and gave as grounds for his arrest the publication and dissemination of material benefitting the enemy (North Korea). Employees of *Heem* Publishing Company who witnessed the arrest said that a large number of books and articles were confiscated including books entitled *Action Philosophy* and *The Theory of the Student Movement*. The arrest of Kim Yon-in closely followed that of Lee Song-woo and Kim Byong-hak on 18 March. They have also been accused of publishing material benefitting North Korea. Police confiscated a number of books and computer diskettes from *Ilbit* Publishing, including *The Practice of Socialism*, volumes 1 and 11 (published in 1991); *Flowers of Salt, Flowers of Mist* (poems by Jung In-hwa); *The History of the Construction of the Party* (translation of a book published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences) and prison writings by Yoon Cheol-ho, a former political prisoner in South Korea.

Both *Heem* and *Ilbit* Publishing Companies are legal enterprises and some of the publications seized by police officers were published and distributed several years ago. These arrests reinforce Amnesty International's concern that the National Security Law may be enforced in an arbitrary manner to detain prisoners of conscience. Information

which has been published and sold to the public may in certain cases be considered "anti-state" and "pro-North Korean". This appears to be the case with the arrests of Kim Yon-in, Lee Song-woo and Kim Byong-hak.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: please send letters and faxes:

◆ *expressing concern that publishers Kim Yon-in, Lee Songwoo and Kim Byonghak are prisoners of conscience, held for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association and calling for their immediate and unconditional release.*

◆ *expressing concern that the prisoners were deprived of sleep during interrogation and urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from further ill-treatment in police custody.*

Appeals to:

◆ President Kim Young-sam

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1 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu, Seoul
Republic of Korea
Fax: +822 770 0253

◆ Mr Kim Doo-hee, Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice
1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province
Republic of Korea
Fax: +822 504 3337

◆ Mr Kim Hwa-nam, Director

National Police Administration
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◆ and to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country.

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