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£SOUTH KOREA

@Professors Targeted in Latest National Security Law Crackdown

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Amnesty International is concerned at reports that nine university professors face prosecution and imprisonment under the National Security Law for writing a textbook which the authorities allege to be pro-North Korean. The nine professors are Chang Sang-hwan, Cho Tae-ryong, Paek Choi-hum, Lee Hyu-suk, Lee Chang-ho, Song Ki-ho, Kim Chun-hyong, Kim Ui-dong and Chong Chin-sang. If detained on these charges, they will be prisoners of conscience, held for exercising their rights to freedom of expression. Amnesty International believes that these professors are the latest victims in a crackdown on people expressing progressive and leftist views which has taken place in South Korea since the death in July of North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung.

The nine professors from Kyongsang University in Chinju city are accused of writing a book, *Understanding Korean Society*, which was published several years ago and has been used as a university text book since 1990. According to the authorities the book may violate the National Security Law on the grounds that it supports communist ideology and instigates class struggle and revolution. The professors claim, however, that the book merely gives a balanced view of Korean society and is not intended to be pro-North Korean. They point out that the book has been used as a university textbook for the past four years. According to one report, the prosecution also wish to question a number of students whom it suspects of receiving good marks from the nine professors for supporting Marxism and North Korean ideology in their essays.

Professor Chang Sang-hwan, 44-year-old professor of economics, commented:

"We co-authored the book for a course designed to provide students with basic knowledge of the reality of Korean society. Alleging that it benefits the enemy is to seriously infringe upon the research and educational activities of the university. . . taking issue with a college textbook which has been in use for four years, the prosecution is seeking to try us in a kangaroo court. This is a challenge to the basic rights of the people and we will not comply with the summons".

Since the death on 8 July of former North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, the South Korean authorities have ordered the arrest and investigation of dozens of South Koreans on suspicion of sending condolence messages to North Korea, sympathising with North Korea and attempting to visit North Korea (see ASA 25/25/94, *Death of Kim Il Sung leads to Arrests in South Korea*, issued on 20 July). Most of the people arrested are students accused of sending messages of condolence to North Korea. Amnesty International is concerned that many people appear to have been detained and investigated for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association and that such people should be released.

The National Security Law prohibits unauthorized contact with North Koreans on penalty of imprisonment. The law also punishes actions which may be interpreted as siding with, encouraging or praising North Korea, a provision which has been loosely interpreted and has led to arbitrary arrests of prisoners of conscience including students, dissidents, writers, publishers and others.

Amnesty International is also concerned that there may be further arrests as part of what appears to be a concerted campaign against people with leftist or progressive ideas. In early August lawmakers from the ruling Democratic Liberal Party are reported to have urged the government to remove professors and teachers who instill leftist ideas in students. This followed a statement by the President of Sogang University that some students take orders from North Korea and police reports that the majority of student councils are controlled by leftist students. Amnesty International is urging the authorities to ensure that people are not arrested for merely exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

KEYWORDS: ACADEMICS1 / CENSORSHIP / PRISONERS' TESTIMONIES /

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 8DJ, UNITED KINGDOM

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send letters and faxes to the South Korean Government:

- ◆ expressing concern at the investigation of nine university professors under the National Security Law for writing a book alleged to be pro-North Korean;
- ◆ urging the authorities not to arrest the professors on these charges which would constitute a violation their rights to freedom of expression;
- ◆ expressing concern about the recent arrests of many leftist students and dissidents for pro-North Korean activities, some of whom are prisoners of conscience held for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Appeals to:

◆ President Kim Youngsam

The Blue House
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
209 Mi Kun-dong
Sudaemoon-gu
Chongno-gu, Seoul
Republic of Korea
Fax: c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs +822 720 2686

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

This appeal has been sent to all KOTARAN coordinators for action.