

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Executions / Fear of further executions

7 October 1994

SOUTH KOREA

Chon Ki-chol, aged 27  
Suh Chae-tak, aged 48

Lee Pil-wan, aged 41  
Park G1-tae, aged 29

Cho hyun-chul, aged 35  
Mun Sung-do, aged 41  
Kim Mu-kyeong, aged 31  
Kim Dae-Hung, aged 29  
and 3 others (names not known)

Lee Duek-jae, aged 31  
Cha Sun-suk, aged 35  
Kim Man-su, aged 48  
Oh Tae-hwan, aged 35

The execution of 15 people on 6 October 1994 has raised fears that others on death row in South Korea may also have their sentences carried out at any time.

This concern has been heightened by reports of the Ministry of Justice stating that the executions were a response to public concern about violent crime, and Amnesty International fears that the decision to execute the 15 may have been motivated in part by recent sensational media coverage of violent crime. These are the first executions in South Korea for nearly two years.

The 15 executions were carried out by hanging at prisons in Seoul, Taegu and Pusan. Those executed had reportedly been convicted of murder, including Chon Ki-chol. Ministry of the Justice officials are reported to have said that seven of those executed had donated their organs for transplantation as a sign of repentance for their crimes.

Executions are carried out in secret and the authorities do not inform a prisoner's relatives or lawyer of an impending execution. Prisoners themselves receive only a few hours' notice, according to sources familiar with the procedures.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, considering it to be the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before these latest executions some 50 people were believed to be on death row in South Korea including fourteen who were sentenced to death during 1994. These were the first executions since December 1992 when nine prisoners were executed.

In September a gang of men were arrested on charges of mass murder. The arrests and details of the alleged crimes were widely reported by the media in South Korea and may have been used as justification for the latest executions. A Ministry of Justice spokesman is reported to have said: "The executions show the determination of the government to expel such heinous, anti-human criminals eternally from this society".

The South Korean government justifies its use of the death penalty as a deterrent to violent crime. However, in no country has the death penalty been conclusively shown to have a greater deterrent effect than other forms of punishment.

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

- expressing deep regret about the execution on 6 October of 15 prisoners

- expressing Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment, pointing out that it has never been conclusively demonstrated that the death penalty is a deterrent to violent crime;
- calling on the government to commute all death sentences and take steps to abolish the death penalty in law.

#### **APPEALS TO**

##### 1) President

President Kim Young-sam  
The Blue House

1 Sejong-no, Chongno-gu  
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**Telegrams: President Kim, Seoul, Republic of Korea**

**Telexes: 24651 or 24652 or 24653 WOIMUBU K**

**Faxes: +822 770 0253 or +822 720 2686 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**Salutation: Dear President Kim**

##### 2) Minister of Justice

Mr Kim Doo-hee

Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice

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Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea

**Telegrams: Justice Minister Kim, Shihung-gun, Kyongi Province, Republic of Korea**

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**Salutation: Dear Minister Kim**

#### **COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

##### 1) Editor, Hankyoreh Daily

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**and to the correspondents in your country of South Korean news organizations.**

and to diplomatic representatives of South Korea accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 December 1994.