

@Unfair Trial and Torture: Long-Term Political Prisoners

Introduction

Amnesty International is concerned about the fate of dozens of long-term political prisoners, serving prison terms of between seven years and life imprisonment on national security charges. This report highlights the cases of 16 long-term political prisoners who are prisoners of conscience or possible prisoners of conscience. Many appear to have been tortured and convicted after unfair trials.

There are currently some 80 long-term political prisoners in South Korea. Some of these prisoners were arrested as long ago as the 1950s and some suffer ill-health as a result of prolonged imprisonment. The longest-serving political prisoner has been imprisoned for over 40 years.

Some of the prisoner cases of concern to Amnesty International are described in a set of individual appeals, appended to this document.

Cases alleged to have been fabricated

Amnesty International is concerned about at least 20 long-term political prisoners arrested during the late 1970s and 1980s, who appear to have been convicted after trials which did not conform to international standards. These prisoners were convicted of espionage under the National Security Law and most were sentenced to death or life imprisonment at their first trial. The death sentences were later commuted. In many of these cases there are consistent reports that the prisoners were held incommunicado for up to 60 days after their arrest, that they were severely tortured and that they were convicted largely on the basis of coerced confessions made by themselves or others.

In some of these cases, sufficient information exists to demonstrate that the trial was unfair and that the prisoners are held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association. In other cases, very little information exists apart from testimony provided in later years by the prisoners and their families, which indicate a clear pattern of abuse.

South Korean law prohibits the use of torture. It also prohibits the use as evidence of a confession obtained under torture. Amnesty International considers it imperative that the South Korean authorities should investigate the consistent pattern of abuse which occurred in the cases of many long-term political prisoners. To Amnesty International's knowledge, no

impartial investigation into allegations of torture and other irregularities in these cases has been carried out.

More recent cases

In a number of recent cases the National Security Law has been used to convict political prisoners and sentence them to long prison terms on charges of spying or for other "anti-state" activities. In some of these cases there is concern that prisoners were tortured and denied access to lawyers during interrogation. Some of these prisoners do not appear to have had a fair trial and some have been adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience.

In 1993 13 people were sentenced to prison terms of seven years or more for their alleged involvement in a "spy ring" said to have been operated by the North Korean Government. There are consistent reports that many of these prisoners were tortured during interrogation and forced to sign a confession.

Two leaders of the socialist group *Sanomaeng* (Socialist Workers League) were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1991 and 1992. Other members of the group have been sentenced to long prison terms. In these cases too there are reliable reports that the prisoners were tortured and forced to sign confessions.

The definition of "espionage" under the National Security Law

The National Security Law (NSL) prescribes long sentences or the death penalty for "anti-state" activities or contacts with "anti-state" organizations. The term "anti-state" organization has been used to describe the North Korean Government and countless South Korean groups, mostly those with socialist or communist views. Over the years the NSL has been used widely to imprison people who visited North Korea without government authorization, people who met North Koreans or alleged North Korean agents abroad, people who expressed support for North Korea and people who simply had similar ideas to those of the North Korean Government.

The South Korean courts have ruled that any information which might be useful to North Korea is a state secret, even if it has been made available to the public. Passing such information may be considered an act of espionage. Similarly, any unauthorized contact with a North Korean may be interpreted by the authorities as an act of espionage. The NSL has frequently been used to imprison people who were merely exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

For many years Amnesty International has urged the South Korean Government to amend the NSL so that the rights of freedom of expression and association are protected. The government has consistently failed to do so.

The role of investigative agencies

Many long-term political prisoners were arrested and interrogated by the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP). There are consistent reports that this agency has violated the rights of prisoners through the use of torture and ill-treatment, incommunicado detention and coerced confessions.

Amnesty International believes that the current excessive powers of the ANSP should be curbed. It has recommended to the government that the ANSP's powers to arrest and detain suspects should be suspended until measures to effectively protect the basic rights of detainees have been introduced.

South Korea's International Obligations

Three years ago South Korea acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Two years ago it became a full member of the United Nations. In June 1993 the government announced that it was preparing to ratify the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Punishment.

International human rights standards state that prisoners should be guaranteed their basic rights. These include rights to freedom of expression and association, the right to a fair trial and protection from torture and ill-treatment. In July 1992 the United Nations Human Rights Committee considered a report by the South Korean Government on its implementation of the ICCPR. It recommended that South Korea should:

"intensify its efforts to bring its legislation more in line with the provisions of the Covenant. To that end, a serious attempt ought to be made to phase out the National Security Law which the Committee perceives as a major obstacle to the full realization of the rights enshrined in the Covenant . . ."

In April 1993 the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that the detention of long-term political prisoners Kim Song-man, Hwang Tae-kwon and Chang Ui-gyun is in contravention of provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the ICCPR. These are three of the cases which have been taken up by Amnesty International.

The treatment of long-term political prisoners

Long-term political prisoners are often held in poor conditions and, according to their families, they are denied adequate medical and dental care. Some of these prisoners are aged and suffer ill-health as a result of prolonged imprisonment. Some are said to be suffering from the effects of torture.

Prisoners who have refused to sign a statement of "conversion" renouncing their real or alleged communist beliefs have special problems. These prisoners are denied the possibility of early release on parole and generally receive poorer treatment than other prisoners.

Recommendations to the South Korean Government

In February 1993 a new government took office in South Korea promising greater freedom and democracy. Amnesty International does not believe that the government can fulfil these promises unless it takes immediate action on the cases of long-term political prisoners.

Amnesty International believes that the South Korean Government should:

- ◆ Conduct full and impartial investigations into all reports that prisoners were held incommunicado, tortured and forced to make a confession. Investigations should focus on the arrest, interrogation and trial of the prisoners and findings should be made public.
- ◆ The Government should release prisoners who are held solely for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.
- ◆ Prisoners whose trials did not conform to international standards for a fair trial should either be retried or released.
- ◆ Prisoners who were tortured or ill-treated should be fully compensated. Those found to be responsible for torture or ill-treatment should be brought to justice.

ACTION

What you can do to help long-term political prisoners in South Korea

- ◆ Send appeals to the South Korean Government on behalf of one or more of the prisoners whose cases are described in this document. Focus your appeals on the points outlined at the bottom of each page.

- ◆ Encourage other people to send appeals.

- ◆ Publicise these cases and encourage others to do so.

- ◆ Contact professional organizations and other groups in your own country and urge them to take up these cases with the government and with their counterparts in South Korea.

- ◆ Urge members of your government to raise the cases of these prisoners with the South Korean Government.

ADDRESSES FOR APPEALS

Please send appeals to:

◆ President Kim Young-sam
The Blue House
1 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu
Seoul
Republic of Korea

Fax: +82 2 720 2686 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

◆ Mr Hwang In-sung
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
77 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu
Seoul 110-760
Republic of Korea

Fax: +82 2 739 5830

◆ Mr Kim Doo-hee
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province
Republic of Korea

Fax: +82 2 504 3337

◆ Mr Shin Doo-byong
Ambassador for Human Rights
c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
77 Sejong-no
Chongno-gu
Seoul 110-760
Republic of Korea

Fax: +82 2 720 2686 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Yu Chong-sik

Former student Yu Chong-sik, now aged 53, was arrested in 1975 and has already served 18 years of a life sentence under the National Security Law. He was initially sentenced to death, but this sentence was commuted to life imprisonment after a High Court appeal. He is said to have been convicted after an unfair trial and to have been tortured.

Yu Chong-sik was born in 1940 in Japan. He lived there until the age of five when his family moved to the city of Pusan in South Korea. He studied at Kon Kuk University in Seoul and in the early 1960s went to Japan to study agriculture at Japan University and then at the University of Tokyo. While he was living in Japan he visited North Korea twice, but says he did so merely out of curiosity. He returned to South Korea in 1970, married and had two children. He initially worked for the Japan Trade Promotion Association in Seoul and then became an art dealer.

On 2 March 1975 Yu Chong-sik was arrested by officials of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (now called the Agency for National Security Planning). He was accused of making two trips to North Korea where he allegedly received espionage training. Human rights groups in South Korea and members of his family say that the charges against him were fabricated and that he was tortured during interrogation.

Yu Chong-sik is held in Andong Prison. Letters from supporters abroad have apparently not been delivered to him.

◆ Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Yu Chong-sik was convicted after an unfair trial and that he was tortured. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Yu Chong-sik's conviction and sentence.

Cho Sang-nok

Businessman and former political science student, Cho Sang-nok, now aged 48, has been in prison since 1978 when he was arrested under the National Security Law and sentenced to life imprisonment. He is said to have been tortured during interrogation and convicted after an unfair trial.

From the mid-1960s until 1976 Cho Sang-nok studied law and social studies at Chungang University and Wonju University. During this time he stood for election to the National Assembly as an independent candidate and also worked for a manufacturing business.

In 1976 Cho Sang-nok went to study in Japan when he gained a post-graduate degree in politics, specializing in international relations. He also taught Korean. During this time he was apparently critical of the South Korean Government, although he is said to have openly opposed communism. At some point during his stay in Japan he was invited to make a speech at an event for exchange professors, hosted by the Korean Embassy in Tokyo. During his speech he criticized Japanese imperialism and also advocated democracy in South Korea.

In January 1978 Cho Sang-nok returned to South Korea for a holiday. On the morning of 15 January, as he was eating breakfast, two strangers came to his house and forced him to get into a car. They took him away and questioned him for 17 days. During this time he says that he was subjected to electric shock and water torture and beaten. On 2 February he was sent to Seoul Prison and this date is given by the authorities as the official date of his arrest. In a letter from prison he said:

" . . . two strangers suddenly poked revolvers into my waist from behind and told me to get in the car quietly. They took me in that car to an unknown location, covering my eyes, and they tortured me in every possible way. . .

Cho Sang-nok was accused of contacting members of a pro-North Korean group in Japan and of organizing underground espionage and conducting "anti-state" activities in South Korea. On 24 May 1978 he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Cho Sang-nok is held in Taegu Prison and is said to be in poor health. He has consistently refused to sign a statement of "conversion" renouncing his alleged communist beliefs and is believed to have suffered poor treatment as a result. He has also consistently maintained his innocence. In a letter from prison he said *"I cannot help deploring this injustice with my eyes full of tears. How can I prove my innocence? God will know how"*.

◆ Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Cho Sang-nok was convicted after an unfair trial on the basis of a confession extracted under torture. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Cho Sang-nok's conviction and sentence.

Shin Kui-yong

Merchant seaman Shin Kui-yong, now aged 56, was arrested in 1980 and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment under the National Security Law. He is said to have been convicted on the basis of his confession, extracted under torture.

Shin Kui-yong was a Korean resident of Japan. In 1947 he and his family moved to South Korea where he worked as a farm labourer. In 1965 he took a job as a merchant seaman and on one overseas trip he stopped in Japan to visit an elder brother who still lived there.

After his arrest, Shin Kui-yong was reportedly held incommunicado by the Agency for National Security Planning for some 60 days and during this time he claims to have been tortured. His wife was also questioned for 15 days.

Shin Kui-yong was accused by the authorities of meeting his brother in Japan on several occasions. They said Shin Kui-yong's brother had recruited him as a spy for North Korea and that he had passed his brother information, including details of military installations in South Korea. The main evidence used to convict Shin Kui-yong appears to have been his confession, which he says was extracted under torture.

In 1989 Shin Kui-yong's wife wrote about her husband's case. She said:

"I am not lonely any more. That is because we, the families of falsely-accused spies all over the country are sharing the pain and comforting and supporting each other. It is also a great comfort that our stories are beginning to be revealed. I truly pray and wish for the unification of the country so that there will not be any more victims like us."

Shin Kui-yong is held in Chonju Prison. He has refused to sign a statement of "conversion", renouncing his alleged communist beliefs and has apparently received poor treatment in prison as a result.

◆ **Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Shin Kui-yong was convicted after an unfair trial, on the basis of a confession extracted under torture. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Shin Kui-yong's conviction and sentence.**

Kim Tae-hong

Kim Tae-hong, a former economics student, now aged 36, was arrested in October 1981 and sentenced to life imprisonment under the National Security Law. His sentence was later reduced to 20 years' imprisonment. He is said to have been convicted on the basis of a confession extracted under torture.

Kim Tae-hong was born in 1957 in Japan, the youngest of seven children. In 1977 he went to South Korea to study economics at Yonsei University. He was arrested on 5 September 1981 by the Agency for National Security Planning, but the arrest was not announced publicly until 13 October. He is believed to have been held incommunicado and tortured.

The authorities accused Kim Tae-hong of contacting a pro-North Korean group in Japan while he was living there and of making a secret visit to North Korea in 1981 where he is alleged to have received espionage training. They also said that he had encouraged "anti-government" activities among students at Yonsei University and that he had passed military secrets to North Korean agents in Japan.

These charges were apparently denied by Kim Tae-hong during his trial. He told the court that he had been tortured and forced to make a confession which was used to convict him.

Kim Tae-hong is held in Taejon Prison.

◆ Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Kim Tae-hong was convicted after an unfair trial, on the basis of a confession extracted under torture. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Kim Tae-hong's conviction and sentence.

Park Dong-oon

Park Dong-oon, now aged 48, was arrested in March 1981 and sentenced to death under the National Security Law. His sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Park Dong-oon used to live on Chin Island where he was employed as a manager by the Chin-do Myon Agricultural Cooperative. In March 1981 he and several other members of his family were arrested and accused of belonging to a "Chindo spy ring" which had allegedly acted on instructions from North Korea. Those arrested included Park Dong-oon's brother, his mother, his uncle and his father-in-law. All were held incommunicado for 60 days and all claim to have been tortured. Several members of the family made detailed statements about their torture. This included water torture, beatings, threats and sleep deprivation. They said that they were forced to sign false confessions implicating themselves and Park Dong-oon in a "spy ring" for North Korea. In 1991 his brother wrote to supporters abroad:

"With the help of endless torture the security department transformed the whole family into spies over 60 days. Instead of catching spies they were creating spies. No matter how hard people like us tried later to tell that they had been fabricating facts, nobody would listen to us. There has been not a single news media article that attempted to reveal the truth".

"It turned out that they had dragged my brother, Park Dong-oon, out to a shooting alley at night, shot him, and dragged him to the Han river bank and threatened to throw him into the river. They inflicted all kinds of torture on him. All of my family went through humiliation and pain and I cannot find words to describe them. How long do you think a human being can put up with torture? One month, two months or several months? It is only a matter of time. Nobody can endure it forever".

Other members of Park Dong-oon's family were sentenced to prison terms ranging from three and a half years to seven years' imprisonment. They have now been released.

Park Dong-oon was accused of meeting and collaborating with his father who had been missing since the Korean War and is alleged by the authorities to have returned to South Korea as a spy. The family claim to have had no contact at all with Park Dong-oon's missing father and say that they were forced to write false confessions which were later used to convict them. They also say that witnesses present during the trial were intimidated by the authorities and that public access to the trial was restricted. The only evidence of contacts between Park Dong-oon and his father were the statements made by other family members during interrogation.

Park Dong-oon is held in Kwangju Prison. His family feel that his case is "buried and has disappeared from people's memory".

◆ Please send appeals urging the South Korean authorities to release Park Dong-oon, imprisoned in South Korea since 1981.

◆ Please also express concern that the authorities have failed to adequately investigate claims that members of his family were tortured during interrogation.

Lee Hon-chi

Electronics technician Lee Hon-chi, now aged 41, was arrested in 1981 and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment under a presidential amnesty in 1988. He is said to have been convicted on the basis of a confession extracted under torture.

Lee Hon-chi, a Korean resident in Japan, moved to Seoul with his family in 1977. He obtained employment as an electronics technician for the Japanese-owned New Hope Industrial Company and later for Samsung Electronics.

On 9 October 1981 Lee Hon-chi arrived home late from work. As he went to enter his house he says that he was handcuffed and pushed into a car by around six unidentified men. He was taken away for interrogation and apparently denied access to a lawyer and to his family until 16 February 1982, the date of his first trial. During this time he claims to have been subjected to beatings, sleep deprivation and threats, and forced to sign a confession. Lee Hon-chi's wife was also arrested, although she was in the final stages of pregnancy. She gave birth while under interrogation and was later released with a suspended prison sentence.

Lee Hon-chi was accused of sending information about industrial and military secrets to a North Korean agent in Japan. The authorities also alleged that he had visited North Korea in 1974 to receive training in espionage. These charges formed the basis of his conviction in February 1982. In letters from prison he later said that the charges against him had been fabricated and that his conviction was based on his own confession, extracted under torture. In a letter to his wife he said:

"I was not allowed any visitors. I did not have an attorney. Even after I was put in the detention house I was taken to the security department twice. Who do you think I can trust? . . . Some people say that if you are innocent you should keep denying the charges. I could not do that in the situation I was in. . . I went through all kinds of abuse including sleep deprivation, threats, lies, beating. Events in the next few days were a threat to my, your, and Sung-O's [his son] life and I gave up everything."

Lee Hon-chi is held in Taejon Prison and is apparently in poor health.

◆ **Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Lee Hon-chi was convicted after an unfair trial, on the basis of a confession obtained under torture. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Lee Hon-chi's conviction and sentence.**

Chong Yong

Farmer and fisherman Chong Yong, now aged 42, was arrested in September 1982 and sentenced to life imprisonment under the National Security Law. He is said to have been tortured during interrogation and convicted after an unfair trial.

Chong Yong earned his living as a farmer on Mibop Island, off the northwest coast of South Korea, and supplemented his meagre income by fishing in the coastal waters. On one fishing trip in 1965, he was apparently captured and taken to North Korea where he was held for 20 days before being sent back to South Korea. He was interrogated briefly by the authorities and released. Many years passed. In 1981 he sold his land and moved with his family to the city of Inchon where he obtained employment with the Inchon Steel Company.

On 13 September 1983 Chong Yong was arrested. He was accused of receiving espionage training during his brief stay in North Korea in 1965. The authorities said that he had then returned to South Korea and passed military secrets to a distant cousin, thought to be living in North Korea. Later Chong Yong said that he had been tortured during his 40-day interrogation by the Agency for National Security Planning and forced to make a confession. In a letter from prison he said:

"The investigators bound me to a chair and tortured me incessantly, day and night, compelling me to tell of espionage activities. The torture was so severe that at last I could not resist it any longer. So I said to them 'please tell me what you want to hear'. . . There was however no evidence at all for my espionage activities. . . I complied with their demands because I thought that there was no evidence for the charges and truth would be disclosed in court, and because I could not bear the torture any more. But what I did for immediate survival turned out to be a great mistake. In court, I appealed for truth, which was in vain".

Chong Yong's wife was held for 10 days and questioned about her husband's activities. She also said that she had been tortured and forced to give false information. In an appeal to the Supreme Court on 1 August 1984 she said:

"The torture was too severe for me to bear, however. The investigators battered me, saying 'if you confess you will be released immediately. If not, however, you will be put into prison as well as Chong Yong.' Even though I said repeatedly these things are not true, as I could not resist the torture at last I admitted that they are all true as is said in Chong Yong's statements. . .".

Chong Yong was found guilty and convicted, apparently on the basis of the confessions made by himself and by his wife. Chong Yong is held in Taegu Prison. He is apparently in poor health, suffering from eye problems and high blood pressure.

◆ Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Chong Yong was convicted after an unfair trial, on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Chong Yong's conviction and sentence.

Ham Ju-myong

Businessman Ham Ju-myong, now aged 60, was arrested in 1983 under the National Security Law and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment following his appeal to the High Court. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Ham Ju-myong was born in what is now North Korea. He came to South Korea in the early 1950s and gave himself up to the US forces (the main component of the UN forces which assisted South Korea during the Korean War). He was tried, given a two-year suspended prison sentence and released. He settled in South Korea with his family but was subject to constant surveillance from the authorities and found it difficult to obtain permanent employment. He eventually set up a small sub-contracting company and a café.

On 18 February 1983 Ham Ju-myong was arrested by the Agency for National Security Planning and held incommunicado for over 60 days. He was accused of passing information to a woman in North Korea, who the authorities said he had married around 1950. He is alleged to have sent secret information to this woman from South Korea and to have received payment. Ham Ju-myong later claimed to have been subjected to electric shock and water torture and to have been beaten and deprived of sleep. He said that he was forced to sign a confession extracted under torture. In an appeal to the courts he wrote:

"They told me to tell them about my combat experience, but I did not know what they were talking about. I told them truthfully that after I was released in 1954, I was reunited with my family and I did not perform any espionage activities, that I was merely working hard and minding my own business. . . After that they said that I must have communicated with North Korea through a newspaper advertisement, and the torture was resumed. . . Because I could not stand the torture, I falsely testified. . ."

Ham Ju-myong's trial started in May 1983 and he denied the charges against him. Several of his friends who had also come from North Korea during the Korean War were called to give evidence. They are said to have been detained for several days before the trial and obliged to write

statements testifying that Ham Ju-myong was a communist. This testimony and the prisoners' confession were the main evidence used to convict Ham Ju-myong.

Ham Ju-myong is held in Chonju Prison and is said to be in poor health, suffering from diabetes. Letters from supporters abroad have not been delivered to him.

◆ Please send appeals urging the authorities to release Ham Ju-myong, imprisoned in South Korea since 1983.

Kim Song-man and Hwang Tae-kwon

Kim Song-man, now aged 35, and Hwang Tae-kwon, now aged 37, former political science students, were arrested in 1985 under the National Security Law. They are prisoners of conscience.

Kim Song-man was sentenced to death and Hwang Tae-kwon to life imprisonment. In a presidential amnesty in 1988 Kim Song-man's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and Hwang Tae-kwon's was reduced to 20 years' imprisonment. Several others were arrested on related charges, two of whom remain in prison today.

Kim Song-man studied physics at Yonsei University in Seoul and in 1982 he enrolled at the Western Illinois University in the USA to study political science. Hwang Tae-kwon studied agriculture at Seoul National University and also enrolled at Western Illinois University in 1982, where he met Kim Song-man. The following year he enrolled in the Political Science Department of the New School for Social Research in New York City. Both men were active in the student movement and both were critical of South Korean Government policy. During their studies abroad they became interested in the North Korean political system and met several people considered to be pro-North Korean.

After their arrest, the two men were held incommunicado for some 60 days by the Agency for National Security Planning and both say they were tortured. They were accused and convicted of engaging in "anti-state" activities, under instructions from North Korea. However the main evidence to support these charges were their confessions which, they claimed, were extracted

under torture. During the first trial, the families did not engage human rights lawyers, apparently after intimidation from the authorities, and the prisoners mostly conducted their own defence.

In an appeal to the Supreme Court on 14 August 1986 Kim Song-man wrote:

I am a person who wishes the independence of our nation and democracy. I think that this idea can be realized in a socialistic country. I was interrogated and tortured mercilessly at the Agency for National Security Planning. During the interrogation and torture I was even forced to write a suicide letter to my parents in order to disguise my possible death as a suicide. The press widely published my forced confession as though it was true."

In 1988 Hwang Tae-kwon wrote from his prison cell:

". . . after 60 days of torture and beatings in the basement of the Agency for National Security Planning and after three years of imprisonment for a crime I did not commit, having been silenced all those years, I hope my story will expose the crimes that were committed against me by the powers-that-be in order to extract my 'confession'. I am also hoping to restore my own human dignity which has been ruthlessly trampled upon during the interrogation and imprisonment."

Kim Song-man is held in Kwangju Prison and is in poor health, apparently as a result of torture and stress suffered during his years under sentence of death. He has consistently refused to sign a statement of "conversion" renouncing his alleged communist beliefs and is believed to have suffered poor treatment as a result. He has not been permitted to send letters overseas, but in 1992 he managed to convey the following message to supporters: *"I really want to thank you for your deep and kind consideration. I will remember your kindness in my life for ever. Thank you!"*

Hwang Tae-kwon is held in Andong Prison. He is apparently permitted books and magazines from outside but is suffering from poor dental treatment. In January 1993 he wrote to supporters: *"Thank you very much for your warm concern and efforts for my release. I am not lonely as long as there are people like you. The fact that there are friends who worry about me on the opposite side of the globe inspires me with redoubled courage and hope."*

◆ **Please send appeals urging the immediate and unconditional release of Kim Song-man and Hwang Tae-kwon, prisoners of conscience in South Korea since 1985.**

Kang Yong-ju

Former medical student Kang Yong-ju, now aged 32, was arrested in June 1985 and sentenced to life imprisonment under the National Security Law. His sentence was reduced to 20 years' imprisonment under a presidential amnesty in February 1993. He is said to have been convicted after an unfair trial and to have been tortured.

Kang Yong-ju studied medicine at Chonam University, but was expelled because of his political activities. He was said to have been involved in activities of the Christian Student Council and to have organized student demonstrations on anti-US themes.

Several other people were arrested along with Kang Yong-ju, including Kim Song-man and Hwang Tae-kwon, who have been adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience. Kang Yong-ju was accused of engaging in "anti-state" activities on the orders of North Korea. This included the organization of student demonstrations and the formation of underground student groups which allegedly listened to North Korean radio broadcasts.

Kang Yong-ju was held incommunicado during his interrogation by the Agency for National Security Planning until 5 August. During this time he is said to have been tortured. He was tried along with several other prisoners arrested on related charges, all of whom were given long prison sentences or the death penalty. During the first trial, the prisoners' families were apparently intimidated into not engaging human rights lawyers and the prisoners mostly defended themselves. Kang Yong-ju denied the charges against him but was found guilty.

Kang Yong-ju is held in Taegu Prison. He has consistently refused to sign a statement of "conversion" renouncing his alleged communist beliefs and has apparently received poor treatment as a result. He is said to be in ill health.

◆ Please send appeals expressing concern at reports that Kang Yong-ju was convicted after an unfair trial and that he was tortured. Urge the authorities to investigate these reports and to review Kang Yong-ju's conviction and sentence.

Chang Ui-gyun

Publisher Chang Ui-gyun, now aged 42, was arrested in 1987 under the National Security Law and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. His sentence was reduced to eight years on appeal in May 1988. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Chang Ui-gyun studied journalism at Sogang University and then established the Kaema publishing company which specialized in books on ancient Korean history. He also wrote short stories, poetry and songs. In 1982 his publishing licence was withdrawn after he published a book of poetry which was critical of the government. In 1985 he went to Japan to study ancient Korean history at Kyogo University. He used the opportunity of his stay in Japan to learn more about North Korea through attending lectures, reading books not available in South Korea and meeting members of pro-North Korean organizations.

In March 1987 Chang Ui-gyun returned to South Korea. He was arrested on 5 July, interrogated for 25 days and then sent to Seoul Prison. Apart from a brief meeting with his wife on 11 July, he was not permitted to see anyone until 29 August when he was formally charged. He was accused of passing classified information to pro-North Koreans in Japan under instructions for North Korea.

At his trial in November 1987 Chang Ui-gyun admitted giving information to people in Japan, none of which consisted of a state secret. He admitted reading about and taking an interest in North Korean affairs, but he denied all accusations of spying or supporting North Korea. He also said that he had been subjected to "the tortures everyone knows about". There was no evidence to suggest that he had access to state secrets or had passed such information to North Korea.

Chang Ui-gyun is held in Chonju Prison. He has consistently refused to sign a statement of "conversion" renouncing his alleged communist beliefs and has apparently received poor medical care as a result. In 1989 he published *Where is our children's country*, a collection of his letters from prison. After this the prison authorities refused to allow him to write.

◆ **Please send appeals urging the release Chang Ui-gyun, a prisoner of conscience in South Korea since 1987.**

Poem by Chang Ui-gyun

Mother Sky and Father Sky

Your sister Yeo-lim is beautiful, like the sky that changes colour
Red in the morning, purple in the evening
even in the rain, she keeps her rainbow smile

You, Joo-suk, are the bounteous sky curving above us
all day long, massive, towering, clouds and pinwheel clouds breath smoke
in no time a brave soldier becomes an aeroplane and flies away

The strength of the sky is your brother Joo-ho
Your friends, the sun, the moon and the stars, like everything on the earth
rain in summer, snow in winter
are watching over you 365 days

Written on 18 August 1988, for his his five-year-old son on his birthday

Suh Kyung-won and Pang Yang-kyun

Parliamentarian Suh Kyung-won, now aged 55 and his secretary, 38-year-old Pang Yang-kyun, were arrested in 1989 under the National Security Law. Suh Kyung-won was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment and Pang Yang-kyun to seven. They are prisoners of conscience.

Suh Kyung-won was a farmer and in the early 1980s he became an active member of the Catholic Farmers Association. In 1988 he was elected to the National Assembly on behalf of the main opposition party at the time, the Party for Peace and Democracy. In August of that year he made an unauthorized visit to North Korea where he apparently met the North Korean President Kim Il-sung and other officials. Pang Yang-kyun was secretary to Suh Kyung-won.

The two men were arrested in mid-1989. Suh Kyung-won was accused of making an unauthorized visit to North Korea, of passing information to the officials he met there and of engaging in political activities under instructions from North Korea. Pang Yang-kyun was accused of failing to report Suh Kyung-won's visit to North Korea and of passing information to a North Korean agent in Germany.

Both men later reported that they had been tortured during interrogation by the Agency for National Security Planning. Suh Kyung-won was denied access to his lawyers for 24 days. He later said:

"Investigators punched me in the face and repeatedly landed crushing blows on my left foot about 10 days after I was taken into custody. The left side of my face was badly swollen and the inside of my mouth began bleeding. . . They forced me to remain awake for the first three nights."

During his trial in September 1989, Suh Kyung-won told the court that he had been forced to make a false confession. He justified his visit to North Korea as motivated by his desire to see Korea reunified. He was, however, found guilty.

Pang Yang-kyun also said he had been tortured. During his trial he said that he had been subjected to beatings, death threats and sleep deprivation by interrogators. He denied passing information to a North Korean agent and he also denied knowledge of Suh Kyung-won's visit to North Korea. In its verdict the court said that: *"In Pang Yang-kyun's case the court cannot rule out the possibility that he was tortured while being interrogated by the Agency for National Security Planning . . ."*

In spite of this astonishing admission, Pang Yang-kyun was found guilty.

Pang Yang-kyun is held in Chonju Prison and has suffered from ill-health since his imprisonment, apparently as a result of the torture he suffered. He is married with two daughters, aged four and eight. Suh Kyun-won is held in Chinju Prison and is thought to be in good health. He is married and has four young children.

Both prisoners gain support and encouragement from the knowledge that friends and supporters are campaigning for their release. In April 1993 Pang Yang-kyun wrote to a supporter overseas: "*I don't know how to thank you and the committee members for watching over my family with thoughts of love. Your concern is greatly appreciated particularly because I am behind prison bars. . .*"

◆ **Please send appeals urging the immediate and unconditional release of Suh Kyung-won and Pang Yang-kyun, prisoners of conscience in South Korea since 1985.**

Baik Tae-ung

Former law student Baik Tae-ung, aged 31, was arrested in April 1992 and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment under the National Security Law. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Baik Tae-ung was arrested on 29 April 1992 by the Agency for National Security Planning and interrogated for 22 days. During his trial in July 1992 he told the court:

"During the 22 days of ANSP interrogation, I was subjected to various types of torture such as sleep deprivation, drug injection and mob beating. Going through these rounds of torture I prepared myself for death three times . . ."

Baik Tae-ung was accused of establishing and belonging to *Sanomaeng* (Socialist Workers' League) in 1989 and of being active in the organization until the time of his arrest. The South Korean authorities have labelled *Sanomaeng* as an "anti-state" organization and arrested its alleged members. They said that it was preparing for an armed uprising to establish a "people's government" and that it had links with North Korea. Since 1990 over 200 *Sanomaeng* members have been arrested and many have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms.

Although the aims of *Sanomaeng* do not appear to have been clearly defined, Amnesty International believes that there is no evidence to suggest that its members were seeking an armed uprising of the type described by the authorities. It is said to have had a large membership among students and workers and to have advocated a South Korean form of socialism, including the implementation of a mixed economy, electoral reform and greater efforts towards achieving Korean reunification. Some of its members, including Baik Tae-ung, have demonstrated that they were seeking peaceful and democratic change. During his trial, Baik Tae-ung told the court:

"Politically, Sanomaeng aims at liberty and democracy, economic equality and a society not swayed by a handful of monopolistic business conglomerates and instead a society in which workers and small farmers become masters. I would like to ask: why is Sanomaeng an anti-state organization? Sanomaeng has never assumed the title of government. It has never purported to disturb or overthrow the State. Unlike the New People's Army in the Philippines or the Shining Path in Peru, Sanomaeng is not an organization of armed struggle. . ."

Sanomaeng cultivates its ability to exercise widespread influence and forms relationships with people in various walks of life, because it has a vision to transform our society, thoroughly, democratically, peacefully and in the manner guaranteed by the democratic institutions of our society . . ."

Sanomaeng aspires to build a party named the Socialist Workers' Party. We have a firm belief that it will not be long before Sanomaeng and the Socialist Workers' Party are legalized. We have been doing preparatory work in this connection. We have drawn out a solid plan wherein we will build the Socialist Workers' Party by the end of 1995 and get a group of socialist candidates successfully elected to the 1996 National Assembly election and let them triumphantly march into parliament."

Baik Tae-ung was sentenced to life imprisonment on 27 October 1992. When delivering the court's verdict, the judge is reported to have said that he should be segregated from society indefinitely because he had ignored the liberal democratic system and the market economy, upheld in the Constitution. He also said that Baik Tae-ung had not been sentenced to death in consideration of the fact that he had said he wanted to establish a legal political party using peaceful methods. Baik Tae-ung is held in Wonju Prison.

Since Baik Tae-ung's arrest, the authorities have continued to arrest Sanomaeng members on the grounds that it is an "anti-state" organization. Those detained include Baik Tae-ung's wife Chong Kyong-hee who is serving a three-year prison term. She is also a prisoner of conscience.

◆ **Please send appeals urging the immediate and unconditional release of Baik Tae-ung, a prisoner of conscience in South Korea.**

Kim Nak-jung

Writer and activist Kim Nak-jung, aged 61, was arrested in August 1992 under the National Security Law and sentenced to life imprisonment. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Kim Nak-jung is a well-known political activist who has pursued peaceful reunification of the divided Korean peninsula since the end of the Korean War (1953). These activities led to his arrest and imprisonment on both sides of the Korean peninsula. In 1955 he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment in North Korea when he submitted his own reunification plan to North Korean leaders. Returning to South Korea one year later he was arrested there on charges of spying for the North. After a series of trials he was released but he was arrested again in 1963 and served two years in prison for publicizing his visit to North Korea.

Kim Nak-jung obtained a master's degree in economics and lectured on economic history at Korea University. He belonged to a number of citizens' groups supporting reunification and established the Research Group for Peaceful Reunification. He has written numerous books and articles on the subject of reunification, the labour movement and economics. In 1990 he became co-president of the *Minjung* (People's) Party.

On 25 August 1992 Kim Nak-jung was taken from his home by officials of the Agency for National Security Planning who did not show a warrant of arrest. His wife and two daughters were also arrested and held incommunicado for 10 days. Kim Nak-jung was not permitted to see his lawyer until 7 September - 13 days after his arrest. He later revealed that he had been beaten and deprived of sleep during interrogation. He told relatives he had gone through "what no human being should be made to suffer".

Kim Nak-jung was one of 62 prisoners accused of involvement in a "spy ring" allegedly operated by the North Korean Government. He was accused of collecting state secrets through his activities in the *Minjung* Party and through meetings with North Korean agents. Kim Nak-jung admitted meeting the North Korean agents, but denied all charges of spying. He defended his actions as those of a peaceful activist who wished to help bring about the reunification of North and South Korea. He told the court:

"I thought that it would be all right as far as I did not betray South Korea and did not cooperate with the activities which aimed at the destruction and overthrow of the South Korean Government. In reality, through contacts with the North Korean people, I held fast to such a position".

There is no evidence to suggest that Kim Nak-jung passed classified information to North Korea. When delivering his verdict, the judge said that he understood Kim Nak-jung's passion and desire

for reunification but added that he had to pass a guilty verdict because the defendant had broken the law.

During his first trial hearing, Kim Nak-jung made a lengthy statement about his aims, ideals and activities. He said:

"I have lived here in South Korea for over 60 years. Through my life in South Korea, I have published numerous books and articles; delivered innumerable lectures and speeches; and appeared on many TV and radio interviews and debates. Not only the people who have had personal contacts with me but also those who have read my books or listened to my lectures, speeches or discussions are well aware that I have been an adamant pacifist opposing violent revolution and one-party dictatorship as well as a strong advocate of peaceful reunification of our nation . . . Since 1954 when nobody dared to talk about peaceful reunification I have argued that in order to achieve reunification, both North and South Korea should stop attempting to overthrow each other and instead try to recognize and respect the presence of each other, promising non-aggression, security, international guarantees and increasing exchange and cooperation. Through these measures, I have argued, we should be able to hand down a reunified Korea to our descendants. I have struggled to achieve this and I have kept this conviction for the past 40 years. But for both North and South Korea, who were obsessed with how to topple each other, my arguments were intolerable and as a result I had to face various kinds of serious persecution and repression. . ."

Kim Nak-jung is held in Seoul Prison

◆ Please send appeals urging the immediate and unconditional release of Kim Nak-jung, a prisoner of conscience in South Korea.