
amnesty international

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)

@Arrest and ill-treatment of history professor

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Professor Park Chang-hee is reported to have been deprived of sleep, beaten and threatened after his arrest in April under the National Security Law. Amnesty International believes that Park Chang-hee may be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the non-violent exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. It is calling for an investigation into reports that he was ill-treated during questioning by officers of the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP, South Korea's intelligence agency) and the prosecution.

Professor Park Chang-hee, aged 63, was arrested at midnight on 26 April 1995 by some 20 ANSP officers who also searched his house and took a number of items including a map, a pair of binoculars, a fax machine, a calendar and some of his writings. Park Chang-hee was taken to the ANSP's headquarters in Seoul where he was held and questioned for 19 days. During this time he claims to have been deprived of sleep, beaten about the head, threatened and forced to drink alcohol. After visiting him on 3 May his daughter was herself questioned in a threatening manner for two hours. Under pressure Park Chang-hee apparently signed a statement of "confession", admitting that he had joined the Workers Party of [North] Korea.

On 15 May Park Chang-hee was transferred to Seoul Prison and he was taken for questioning to Seoul District Prosecutor's Office. During questioning on 16 May when he tried to retract his earlier "confession" he was reportedly kicked and threatened by the prosecutor. He was questioned over a number of days, during which time he was granted very limited access to his lawyer and family. On 9 June Park Chang-hee was charged under the National Security Law for meeting and communicating with an alleged North Korean agent, for passing state secrets and for praising and encouraging North Korea. He is awaiting trial in Seoul Prison.

On 15 May the ANSP released to the media a 22-page report entitled "results of the investigation of the espionage case of the Foreign Language University of Korea professor, Park

Chang-hee". The disclosure of incriminating allegations by the ANSP may have damaged Park Chang-hee's chances of receiving a fair trial and is contrary to the principle of the presumption of innocence enshrined in South Korean law and in international standards. Article 126 of South Korea's Criminal Code specifically prohibits the pre-trial publication of material related to court cases.

Amnesty International is concerned that Professor Park Chang-hee may be a prisoner of conscience, held for the non-violent exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. Over the years South Korea's National Security Law has been used to imprison people who visited North Korea without government authorization or who met North Koreans abroad and those who expressed support for North Korea or ideas similar to those of the North Korean Government. The law provides long prison terms for "espionage" and "anti-state" activities but these terms are often defined very broadly. For example, the definition of "state secret" has included information which was publicly available in South Korea and the term "anti-state" has been applied to many non-violent organizations.

Amnesty International is calling for an investigation into reports that Park Chang-hee was ill-treated by the ANSP and the prosecution. Under the National Security Law suspects may be questioned for up to 50 days before charge (up to 20 days by the ANSP or the police and up to 30 days by the prosecution). Amnesty International believes this excessive length of time may facilitate the ill-treatment of suspects. The organization has received reports that suspects are routinely deprived of sleep and threatened during interrogation and that some are also beaten.

Since 1977 Professor Park Chang-hee has taught history at the Foreign Language University of Korea. He studied in Japan from 1958 to 1968, specializing in the history of the period of Japanese occupation of Korea (1910 to 1945).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send letters and faxes:

- expressing concern about the reported ill-treatment of Professor Park Chang-hee by the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) and Seoul District Prosecutor's Office;*
- expressing concern that the pre-trial disclosure of incriminating allegations by the ANSP may have damaged Park Chang-hee's chances of receiving a fair trial;*
- calling for the release of Park Chang-hee if he is held solely for the non-violent exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association.*

Appeals to:

- ◆ *President Kim Young-sam, The Blue House, 1 Sejong-no, Chongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea, Fax: +822 770 0253*
- ◆ *Mr Ahn Woo-man, Minister of Justice, 1 Chungang-dong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea Fax: +822 504 3337*
- ◆ *Mr Kwon Young-hae, Director, Agency for National Security Planning, Presidential Office, The Blue House, 1 Sejong-no, Chongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea, Fax: +822 720 2686 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*
- ◆ *and to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country.*

This is a quick KOTARAN action, send to selected KOTARAN groups for action

KEYWORDS: POSSIBLE POC / ACADEMICS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / TRIALS / ESPIONAGE /

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