

---

# *amnesty international*

---

## £SOUTH KOREA

### @Appeal for the release of human rights activist Noh Tae-hun

**SEPTEMBER 1993**

**AI INDEX: ASA 25/32/93**

**DISTR: SC/CO/GR**

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Noh Tae-hun, 30-year-old year old human rights activist who was arrested on 15 July on charges under the National Security Law. Amnesty International believes that Noh Tae-hun is being held for his non-violent political activities. It is concerned that the real reason for his arrest appears to be his work to protect human rights in South Korea.

Noh Tae-hun is a long-standing and respected human rights activist who is associated with a number of South Korean human rights groups. He is a key member of the recently established umbrella group KONUCH (Korean NGO Network for the World Conference on Human Rights) and played an active role in organizing Korean NGO participation in the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993. He has also worked with *Minkahyop* (Association of Families), STIK (Stop Torture in Korea) and *Sarangbang* (Group for Human Rights).

Noh Tae-hun was arrested by officers of the Security Division of the National Police Administration at around 6.30pm on 15 July while he was visiting the office of his lawyer. He had already been detained for interrogation from the morning of 14 July until the morning of 15 July. On this occasion his lawyer and a colleague noticed that the warrant for his arrest was incorrectly filled in and failed to show the summary of charges against him or his place of detention. They urged police officers to follow the correct legal procedures and were themselves threatened and beaten. Noh Tae-hun was taken away for questioning.

From 15 July until 24 July Noh Tae-hun was interrogated by the police. During this time he was subjected to long periods of interrogation, threats and sleep deprivation. For most of this period his lawyers were not able to meet him in private.

On 11 August Noh Tae-hun was charged under Article 7 of the National Security Law. The basis of this charge is that he possessed and published a number of pamphlets and books written by former political prisoners with the purpose of "praising" and "siding with" North Korea. These works, entitled *Deprived Days* and *Days and Nights in Prison*, were written by former long-term political prisoners in South Korea and mostly contained reflections on their prison life. The books and pamphlets are publicly available in South Korea and the authors have not been arrested. Noh Tae-hun, however, faces a prison sentence of up to seven years.

Amnesty International is concerned that the real reason for Noh Tae-hun's arrest appears to be his work to protect and enhance human rights in South Korea. It believes that provisions of the National Security Law place unnecessary restrictions on the rights of freedom of expression and association and may easily be used to silence government critics. Amnesty International has repeatedly urged the authorities to amend the National Security law to bring it into line with international standards.

During his speech to the World Conference on Human Rights, the South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke of the important role played by individuals and non-governmental organizations in the protection and promotion of human rights. Weeks later the authorities effectively curtailed the work of Noh Tae-hun, one of the most prominent advocates of human rights in South Korea.

Noh Tae-hun is held in Seoul prison. He has been refused release on bail.

Photograph of Noh Tae-hun, taken at the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, Austria, June 1993

**KEYWORDS:** ARBITRARY ARREST / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS /

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CRIMINAL CHARGES / LAWYERS / UN /  
INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS /

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

***WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF NOH TAE-HUN AND  
PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH KOREA***

- ◆ Write to the Minister of Justice and the President seeking the immediate and unconditional release of Professor Noh Tae-hun; send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country;
- ◆ Encourage others to send appeals;
- ◆ Contact professional groups and others in your country and urge them to take up the case of Noh Tae-hun.

***Send appeals to:***

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

President Kim Youngsam  
The Blue House  
1 Sejong-no  
Chongno-gu  
Seoul  
Republic of Korea  
**Fax:** c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs: +82 2 720 2686

***Send copies of your letters to:***

News Editor  
Dong-A Ilbo  
139 Sejong-no  
Chongno-gu  
Seoul  
Republic of Korea  
**Fax:** +82 2 734 7742

News Editor  
Chosun Ilbo  
61, 1-ga, Taepyeong-no  
Chung-gu

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

---