

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 25/38/93
Distr: UA/SC

14 October 1993

Further information on UA 137/93 (ASA 25/17/93, 27 April 1993) and follow-up (ASA 25/20/93, 19 May 1993), Prisoner of conscience/fear of ill-treatment
New Concern: Prisoner of conscience faces life imprisonment

SOUTH KOREA:Hwang Suk-yong, 50, writer

Hwang Suk-yong is currently on trial on charges under the National Security Law. The prosecution has asked for a life sentence and a verdict is expected before the end of October. Amnesty International is concerned that Hwang Suk-yong, whom it has adopted as a prisoner of conscience, now faces life imprisonment on charges which amount to no more than the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. It considers his case to be a crucial test of the government's willingness to improve the human rights situation in South Korea. It is appealing to the authorities to drop all charges against Hwang Suk-yong and to release him immediately and unconditionally.

Hwang Suk-yong was arrested in April 1993 on his return to South Korea from a period of self-imposed exile abroad. He is accused of making an unauthorized visit to North Korea in 1989 and of contacting North Korean officials. He justified this visit as motivated by his desire to help achieve reunification of the two Koreas. Under the National Security Law his actions are defined as "espionage". This law has frequently been used to imprison people who were merely exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Hwang Suk-yong is the best-known political prisoner to be tried since February 1993 when a new government took office, committed to reform and full human rights. Amnesty International believes that Hwang Suk-yong's conviction and imprisonment would also have a detrimental effect for other prisoners who are already serving lengthy prison terms on similar charges.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hwang Suk-yong is a well-known and popular writer who has written over 20 novels and essays which have been published and read throughout the world. He is a leading member of the South Korean Association of Writers for National Literature and the Korean Nationalistic Artists Federation. He returned to South Korea in April 1993 hoping to participate in the new government's reform program. He is now held in Seoul Prison.

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

- expressing concern that Hwang Suk-yong faces long-term imprisonment as a prisoner of conscience;
- urging the authorities to drop all charges against him and to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- expressing concern that Hwang Suk-yong's imprisonment would have a detrimental

effect for the future protection of the rights to freedom of expression and association in South Korea.

APPEALS TO:

1) President

President Kim Young-sam

The Blue House

1 Sejong-no

Chongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Telegrams: President Kim, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Telexes: 24651 or 24652 or 24653 WOIMUBU K

Faxes: + 822 720 2686

Salutation: Dear President Kim

2) Minister of Justice

Mr KIM Doo-hee

Minister of Justice

1 Chungang-dong

Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun

Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea

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

Telexes: 24757 MOJUST K

Faxes: + 822 504 3337

Salutation: Dear Minister Kim

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Seoul District Court

Chief Judge

Seoul District Criminal Court

170-1 Socho-dong

Socho-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

2) Editor, Hankyoreh Daily

1-2 Yangpyeong-dong 2-ga

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Faxes: + 822 710 0310, + 822 671 7797

3) Committee for the Release of Hwang Suk-yong

c/o Association of Writers for National Literature

612-5 Ahyn-dong

Mapo-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Faxes: +822 392 1838

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 25 November 1993.