

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 25/02/91  
Distr: UA/SC

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UA 58/91

Union Leaders Arrested

18 February 1991

SOUTH KOREA: LEE Eun-ku

CHUNG Yoon-kwang

LEE Chul-kyu

SON Jong-kyu

YOON Myung-won

PARK Chang-soo

HONG Young-pyo

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Seven trade union leaders were arrested by police on 9 February and charged under Article 13-2 of the Trade Union Law, which prohibits third party interference in labour disputes. They had been taking part in a meeting to discuss actions that unions could take in solidarity with workers at the Daewoo Shipbuilding and Heavy Machinery Company who had gone on strike the previous day. Sixty other trade unionists were also arrested at the same time but were later released. The arrests took place as the men left the meeting. Amnesty International is concerned that the seven men may be detained for the non-violent exercise of their right of freedom of association and is calling for their immediate release.

The seven men are:

LEE Eun-ku, President of the Daewoo Motor Company union

CHUNG Yoon-kwang, President of Seoul Subway Company union

LEE Chul-kyu, President of Poongsan Metal Company union

SON Jong-kyu, President of Keum Ho Tyre union

YOON Myung-won, President of Daewoo Precision union

PARK Chang-soo, President of Hanjin Heavy Industry union

HONG Young-pyo, Secretary of the Conference of Large Factory Trade Unions

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unions have grown in strength since July 1987 as a result of political reforms, and the following years saw a wave of labour unrest and several prolonged strikes affecting key industries. In 1987 and 1988 the government did not intervene to a large extent in trade union disputes. However, as the number of disputes grew and following the emergence in early 1989 of a dissident national trade union association Chonnohyop, the government started to crack down on unionism. The authorities called Chonnohyop a "leftist" and illegal organization, and stated that those involved in its activities would be charged with violating the Trade Union Law. Under the Labour Dispute Mediation Act, third parties, that is people who have no direct link with the workplace where a trade dispute is taking place, are banned from intervening in the dispute and may be sentenced to up to five years' imprisonment or a fine. Over 200 workers and trade unionists are believed to be currently in detention under a variety of charges under labour or criminal legislation.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern that the seven men named above may be detained for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression;

- calling for their immediate release.

**APPEALS TO:**

Mr LEE Jong-nam  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
1 Chungang-dong  
Kwachon-myon  
Shihung-gun  
Kyonggi Province  
Republic of Korea

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Kwachon, South Korea  
Telexes: 24757 MOJUST K  
Faxes: + 82 2 504 3337

Mr Choe Byung-yul  
Minister of Labour  
Ministry of Labour  
1 Chungang-dong  
Kwachon-myon  
Shihung-gun  
Kyonggi Province  
Republic of Korea

Telegrams: Labour Minister  
Telexes: 24718 OLAHQ K  
Faxes: + 82 2 503 9739

**COPIES TO:** Diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Korea in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 1991.