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# **La Via Campesina supports KPL, KWPA and the Korean people's struggle**

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Since April 2008, the Korean people have continuously protested against the US beef imports which are a precondition for the US ratification of the controversial US-Korea FTA. This relates to serious concerns about the safety of US beef. The Korean government has changed its regulations to allow 30 month old beef with bones to enter the Korean market and the people have clearly shown their disapproval of this. Many Korean activists have been arrested, put into prison and searched by the police because of their protests.

The international commission on Food Sovereignty and Trade of La Via Campesina, that met in the Canary Islands (Spain) from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of July strongly supports the peaceful fight of the Korean Peasant League, Korean Women Peasants Association and the movements of the Korean people for their right to have access to safe food and to produce locally.

This struggle for food safety is legitimate and shared by all farmers' organisations of La Vía Campesina. For example, the National Family Farm Coalition from the US has already expressed its support to the KPL, the KWPA and the Korean citizens' movement. The struggle of Korean farmers and peoples movements against US beef imports has strong parallels with the struggle for safe food in Europe since the 1990s in regard to the ongoing efforts against the importation of US beef that is intensively treated with hormones.

We denounce FTAs such as the Korea-US FTA, which have such a big impact on every day life of the Korean population. Not only are they negotiated in secrecy and without transparency or a democratic process, but FTAs undermine the freedom of choice and the access to safe food, which are basic elements of food sovereignty.

La Vía Campesina strongly defends and promotes food sovereignty that, as defined in the Nyéléni declaration of February 2005 includes: "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems".

The struggle of the KPL, the KWPA and the Korean people is an example for all of us. We urge the Korean government to take into account their demands. The Korean government must immediately release all prisoners and remove the activists from the wanted-list.

**Food is not a commodity!**

We defend the right to farm, the right to feed, the right to eat!