

An appeal: Send a protest letter to the Korean government telling it to stop repressing Korean unions

Saturday 28 November 2015, by [KPTU](#), [LabourStart](#) (Date first published: 27 November 2015).

Dear Friends and Allies,

You are all probably aware of the severe repression unions in South Korea are facing.

Likening protesting workers to terrorists, the Park Geun-hye administration has vowed a severe crackdown. Police have been raiding union offices, issuing wide-range summons and arrest warrants and arresting and imprisoning union members and officers.

Within this context, the KPTU office has been raided twice. We and other unions are being targeted because we are opposing the government's anti-worker labour reform policies, which will slash wages, trample trade union rights and expand precarious employment.

Our Cargo Truckers Solidarity Division, which is fighting to win a safe rates system and make the food producer Pulmuone take responsibility for safety in its supply chain, is a particular target of repression. Pulmuone drivers have been on strike since 4 September and 2 members in a high altitude protest since 24 October. As of today eight union members and officers have been imprisoned in relation to this struggle.

Your solidarity is needed. Please participate in the labourstart campaign at the link below and send a protest letter to the Park administration.

Go to:

http://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign.cgi?c=2887

Thank you.

□□□ (Wol-san Liem)

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Korea: Stop attacks on trade unions now

In partnership with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) IndustriALL, Building and Woodworkers International (BWI), the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), the

International Union of Food Workers (IUF), UNI Global Union, and Public Services International (PSI).

The administration of President Park, Guen-hye of Korea has repeatedly sought to weaken the rights of workers and their unions since taking office in 2013, including mobilizing police to disrupt protests and to arrest trade union leaders. The ILO has on several occasions condemned the government of Korea for its serious violations of the right to freedom of association and to bargain collectively. Most recently, police raided the offices of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and its affiliates on 21 November, and seized documents, equipment and computers. Several workers were arrested and a warrant has been issued for the President of the KCTU, Han, Sang-Gyun.

This raid follows the unions' participation in a rally on 14 November to protest, among other things, a proposed package of labour law reforms meant to seriously undermine the rights of workers and their trade unions. The labour reforms pushed by the government would reduce payment for overtime work on days off, would permit temporary agency work in basic manufacturing (which has been illegal to date) and would lower the level of unemployment compensation for workers in low-wage short-term jobs. Most recently, President Park invoked the threat of international terrorism to denounce protest leaders, suggesting that terrorists could take advantage of protests to launch attacks.

The letter

I am deeply concerned about the belligerent behavior of the Korean government. The government must respect the right to freedom of association, including the right to peaceful assembly and to strike. The government must drop all charges against the KCTU President and release all workers detained in relation to the raids and recent protests.

I also urge you to withdraw the regressive labour reforms. These reforms will not boost employment but rather lead to greater insecurity and lower wages for all. The government should not move ahead with any labour reforms without good faith consultations with trade unions.

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