

KCTU Breaking News

KCTU Union Member Dies from Self-Immolation Attempt in Protest of the KOR-US FTA

Sunday 15 April 2007, by [KCTU](#) (Date first published: 1 April 2007).

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On 11:23 am, April 15th, KCTU union member, Bro. Heo Se-Wook, passed away from septicemia as a result of the massive immune system response to the third degree burns all over his body after he attempted to commit suicide by setting himself on fire as an act of resistance against the KORUS FTA on April 1st. The KCTU will carry on his spirit of resistance against the KORUS FTA by mobilizing in full force to oppose the KORUS FTA. The KCTU holds the South Korean government responsible for his death; the South Korean government shut out all voices of dissent against the FTA, leading Brother Heo to the extreme and drastic measure of sacrificing his own life in order to be heard.

On 7:00 pm, April 16th and in solidarity with people's and social movements organizations, the KCTU will hold a candle light vigil to commemorate his life as well as oppose the KORUS FTA.

Brother Heo Se-Wook was a union member of Han-dok Taxi Chapter, Taxi Workers' Branch of Korean Transportation Workers' Union, Korean Federation of Public Services and Transportation Workers' Unions affiliated to KCTU. He was also a member of Democratic Labor Party(DLP) in Korea and a member of Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea. He was very active in many protests and demonstrations against neo-liberal globalization and against US militarism such as the expansion of US military base in Pyungtaek, Kyunggi province.

Please express your condolences to him and solidarity for Korean workers and people's struggle against the KORUS FTA.

Farewell Note by Bro. Heo Se-wook, a union member of KCTU

Stop the Korea-US FTA(Free Trade Agreement) which will destroy my nation!

Stop the humiliating, expedient and undemocratic KORUS FTA negotiations!

I hope that (my self-immolation) will save the Korean people.

Cowardly and anti-reunification organizations which divide the public need to be awakened and open your eyes and throw away your sense of superiority(arrogance).

Do not conclude the secret and undemocratic FTA negotiation until the contents of the negotiation are clearly open to the general public. The government's claim that there is no legal basis (requiring the public be informed about contents of the FTA before signing) is only a deception.

Do not kill the people twice as in the case of the two female middle school students killed by a US Forces armored vehicle in South Korea in June, 2003. We must resolve their Han (injustice, outcry, grievance).

Even though the government continues to emphasize the importance of dialogue, there have been no real dialogues with concerned parties regarding important social issues such as the KORUS FTA and the expansion of the US military base in Pyongtaek. Do not mock the dignified people anymore.

The government has already committed to four preliminary measures* as preconditions to beginning FTA talks and agreed with the clause on investor-state claim during the negotiations toward the KORUS FTA. Despite these facts, the government is trifling with the ordinary people through the smoke-screen tactics that it will protect the rice. Do not import US beef with "mad-cow" disease. The government should not manipulate the public opinion and ignore ordinary people anymore. I don't simply swallow what they tell me to think.

I have never felt the need to sacrifice myself until now.

Even though I am far from this physical world, I want to continue to work along the path of the KCTU.

April 1st, 2007

Brother Heo Se-wook, union member of Korean Federation of Taxi Workers' Unions (affiliated to KCTU)

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KCTU union member attempting self-immolation as an act of resistance KORUS FTA!

Dear Colleagues,

On 3:55 pm, April 1st, Bro. Heo Se-Wook (54), a union member of KCTU, was attempting to suicide by self-immolation as an act of resistance against the Korea-US FTA negotiation. His health condition is very serious and receiving an emergency medical treatment at the Han-River Sungshim Hospital.

The last round of high-level negotiation between Korea and US governments is being held at Hyatt hotel, Seoul and today is the last day. The deadline of the FTA negotiation will be midnight today. So KCTU and Korean people were demonstrating in front of the negotiation site, Hyatt Hotel. During the demonstration, he attempted self-immolation with the voices of “??Stop the Korea-US FTA and President Roh, Step Down!”??.

KCTU strongly denounce the Korean government to push this anti-workers/people Agreement and urge to stop the KORUS FTA immediately which is killing workers and people.

We need your solidarity and support.

We will continue to update the development of this incident.

In Solidarity,

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