

AN INTERNATIONAL PROTEST LETTER

# **Solidarity Call Against the Continuing Suppression of Korea's Anti-FTA Movement**

Thursday 11 October 2007, by [KoA](#) (Date first published: 10 October 2007).

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## **The Continuing Suppression of Korea's Anti-FTA Movement**

The Arrests of Mr. Seok-woon PARK (Executive Committee Chair) and Mr. Je-jun JU (General Secretary) of the Korean Alliance against Korea-US FTA

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTEST LETTER

October 10, 2007

### **The Situation**

On Tuesday, October 9, 2007, 6:40 PM, two officers of the Korean Alliance against the Korea-U.S. FTA, Mr. Seok-woon PARK (Executive Committee Chair) and Mr. Je-jun JU (General Secretary), were arrested. Wanted by the police since December 2006, they were visiting regional organizations to strengthen the anti-FTA movement when their arrests were made. Mr. Park and Mr. Ju are currently detained and being questioned at a police station in Seoul; in a few days, they will be relocated to another jail where they will await trial.

They were arrested on two charges. First is organizing actions, in November and December 2005, against the government and police after two farmers (Yong-chul CHUN and Duk-pyo HONG) were killed by police violence during the struggle against opening Korea's rice market. Second is organizing rallies and demonstrations against the free trade agreement between Korea and the U.S. in November 2006.

The arrests of Mr. Park and Mr. Ju, which come after the arrests of two Co-Chairs of the Korean

Alliance in July, show the Korean government's on-going suppression of people's movement. We, the Korean Alliance, thus feel that their arrests are a direct violation of democratic and constitutional right to assemble and express our opinion.

Since its formation in March 2006, the Korean Alliance has organized peaceful and legal demonstrations against what we think is a seriously unjust agreement for the people of Korea, the U.S., and the world. However, since November 2006, the Roh Moo-hyun Administration has declared all Korean Alliance's public rallies illegal. Police suppression has been severe on all activities of the Korean Alliance.

We believe that the Roh Moo-hyun Administration has gravely violated fundamental rights of the people to assemble and oppose any unjust government practices.

Mr. Park and Mr. Ju have played important roles in Korea's anti-globalization movement. For the past ten years, they have been active in organizing and executing struggle against WTO (in Cancun and Hong Kong) and FTAs (Korea-Chile, Korea-U.S., Korea-EU).

### **Call for International Protest Letter**

We ask the international community to carefully consider the situation of Korea. What is happening in Korea happens daily around the world. We call upon individuals and organizations to endorse this protest letter below. You are also welcome to write your own letter.

***Please copy the letter below and include your name, organization, email/telephone, city, and country.***

Please send endorsements via email to [interstruggle@gmail.com](mailto:interstruggle@gmail.com) by October 19, 2007.

### **Sample Protest letter**

#### **International Protest Letter**

In Protest against the Arrests of Seok-woon PARK and Je-jun JU

We Demand their Immediate Release!

We Demand an Immediate End to the Suppression of the Korean Alliance!

October 10, 2007

From: International Community Concerned about Democratic Principles and Economic and Social Justice

To: South Korea's President Roh Moo-hyun

We are seriously disappointed and troubled by the police suppression of the Korean Alliance against the Korea-U.S. FTA and the arrests of its two officers. We write this urgent letter to demand 1) the immediate release of Mr. Seok-woon Park and Mr. Je-jun Ju, two officers of the Korean Alliance and 2) an immediate end to police suppression of the Korean Alliance.

First, the arrests of Mr. Park and Mr. Ju are a direct violation of basic democratic principles and

constitutional rights. We believe that South Korea is a democratic nation that guarantees, under the constitution, the right to associate and oppose unjust practices of ruling authority. These rights are fundamental to any democratic nation, and we strongly feel that today's arrests may represent a retrogression of Korea's status as a democratic nation.

Second, their arrests are an infringement of international principles of political and civil rights. As a member of the United Nations, South Korea has signed on to conventions that protect and promote the advancement of social freedom and human rights. South Korea has made important democratic strides since the 1980s. We have witnessed this transformation. We urge the Roh Moo-hyun Administration, elected by democratic means, to not forget Korea's history and to foster international and democratic principles. The rights of the people to assemble and express their voices must be protected.

And third, we demand an immediate end of police suppression against the Korean Alliance. The police suppression of FTA protests, which we have seen in the media, is shocking. The fact that the Korean Alliance's activities are singled out and determined as illegal indicates a direct attack against a people's organization and an obvious violation of Korea's constitution.

We disapprove the decisions made by the Roh Moo-hyun Administration on the officers and activities of the Korean Alliance.

Along with the arrests of two Co-Chairs of the Korean Alliance (Mr. Jong-ryul Oh and Mr. Gwang-hoon Jung) in July, we fear that the suppression of the Korean Alliance signals a dangerous digressive trend in Korea's democracy. If this trend continues, we can promise the Administration that the international community will not sit still. We urge the Administration to correct its mistakes and return the rights that are inherent to shared by the people of Korea and the world

[Your name]

[Name of organization]

[Email and/or telephone]

[City]

[Country]

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