

ALERT! Korean Peasant Dead From Police Beatings

Saturday 26 November 2005, by [KPL](#) (Date first published: 26 October 2005).

Korean farmer Jeon Yong-Cheol died on 24th November from cerebral hemorrhage after having been beaten on the head by riot police during demonstration on 15th November.

On 15th November 2005, thousands of farmers gathered in front of the National Assembly to protest the National Assembly's plan to ratify the rice agreement, which would liberalize the Korean rice market to imports from major rice producers.

The demonstration was very viciously repressed by riot police of Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency, who are well-known to be notorious for their violence. Hundreds of farmers - many of them old - were injured during the demonstrations, including one farmer from Boryeong region - Jeon Yong-Cheol (aged 43). However, after going back to his hometown after the demonstrations, he collapsed and at 6:30 am on 24th November, he died from cerebral hemorrhage. The team of doctors who did the autopsy announced that he died from i@severe external shocki. The police are arguing that his head injury is from falling on the ground by himself, however, several witnesses have come out to say that he was severely beaten on the head during the demonstration and that he had consistently complained that his head injuries were painful and that he felt dizzy after the demonstration.

Details:

- On 15th November, participated in the i@National Peasants Rally against Ratification of Rice Agreementi
- Was severely beaten on head, right eye and chest at around 19:00 when riot police charged into the demonstrators
- Traveled back to Boryeong thinking he wouldn't need to go to the hospital, however, in the bus, said to his co-farmer that his i@head spun after the beatingsi
- Was sick throughout 16th November
- Lee Byeong-Hoon, secretary of KPL Boryeong Branch, worried about Jeon went to visit him in his house and found Jeon unconscious
- Lee took Jeon to the local hospital and was told that Jeon had severe cerebral hemorrhage
- Lee took Jeon to Choongnam University Hospital and he was immediately admitted to intensive care
- Underwent two brain surgeries, however, Jeon Yong-Cheol passed away at 6:30am on 24th November

Two farmers have already committed suicide and one farmer lies in hospital after self-immolation attempt. Despite desperate pleas to postpone the ratification of the rice agreement, it was ratified on 23rd November and the Korean government continues to repress the peasants. The ratification is essentially a death sentence for Korean peasants who are already being driven to death - even murder by the police!!

Please send your support and solidarity to the Korean Peasants League
nongsalim daum.net and nongsa chol.com

Organizations in Korea have formed an emergency committee. We will send out further update and proposals on what you can do in your countries and regions. In the meantime, please spread this news wide and far!

You can watch for yourself how severe the repression was on 15th November:

<http://www.ijunnong.net/20051115.html> (in Korean... But no words are necessary!)

For Reference:

(from People's Action against Neoliberal Globalization Newsletter):\

Plan to Liberalize Korean Rice Market Ratified in Korean Parliament

Series of suicides. One peasant dead from police beatings

Much to the anguish of the 3.5 million farmers and the entire Korean population, and despite the continual struggles of farmers, the rice agreement was ratified in the National Assembly on 23rd November. Kang Gi-Gap, MP of Democratic Labor Party and peasant parliamentarian, had been on hunger strike for 28 days and several MPs tried to physically stop the ballot but in vain. 139 legislators voted in favour and 66 against.

The rice agreement is an agreement made with nine major rice exporters including China and US to open up the Korean rice market. The deal will permit Korea another 10-year delay in tariffication, however, only in return for doubling compulsory rice imports by 2014. Right now, compulsory import is limited to 4% and to processed foods and liquors, however, the deal includes an increase to nearly 8%. Moreover, direct sale of imported rice (unprocessed rice for household table) will be opened up to 10% and then 30% by 2014. In summary, the passed deal is basically a plan to liberalize the rice market rendering the 10-year tariffication postponement meaningless.

Peasants have been mobilizing almost everyday for the last couple of weeks - protesting all around the country and blocking highways with their vehicles. 2 farmers have committed suicide - and another lies in hospital after attempts - either in destitution or in protest. One other farmer passed away in the morning of 24th after injuries during a protest and several brain surgeries. Witnesses have said that he was severely beaten in the head by riot police.

The Korean Peasants League has announced that they will continue to struggle directly against the Noh Moo-Hyun government and his neoliberal regime. Farmers are holding candlelight vigils

everyday in front of the National Assembly and are preparing for a candlelight vigil on 26th November. Another all-peoples rally is scheduled for 4th December which will include demands to scrap the government's bill to liberalize irregularization of labour and the proposal to adopt the anti-worker i®Roadmap on Advanced Industrial Relationsi`. The KCTU and rank-and-file workers have also set up protest tents in front of the National Assembly and are holding demonstrations everyday. The KCTU has announced that it will go on general strike on 1st December should the government push forth its bill on irregularization.