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**South Korea**  
**TUC urges end to repression of unions**  
**Thursday 7 August**

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## **Korean Government “in the dock” over union repression**

The TUC has joined worldwide protests about the detention of trade unionists and arrest warrants issued against others, following a massive strike wave.

British trade unionists are being urged to join an internet action against this repression, organised by LabourStart, calling on the Korean authorities to stop repression of the KCTU and its affiliates at [www.labourstart.org/kctu](http://www.labourstart.org/kctu)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has written to President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea (see [www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/KCTU\\_KMWU\\_arrest\\_warrants\\_04-08-08.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/KCTU_KMWU_arrest_warrants_04-08-08.pdf)) protesting at the government's actions in detaining Ms Jin Young-ok, First Vice-President of the ITUC-affiliated Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and the issuing of arrest warrants against several other senior leaders of the KCTU, the Korea Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) and the Hyundai Motor Branch.

Arrest warrants have been issued against KCTU President Lee Suk-haeng and General Secretary Lee Yong-shik, KMWU President Jung Gab-deuk and First Vice-President Nam Taek-gyu and all six of the top elected officials of the Hyundai Motor Branch. The KCTU's headquarters were surrounded by police following the issuing of the warrants, persons entering the building have been searched and search warrants have been issued for the homes of those facing arrest. Family members have also been placed under surveillance.

The government's actions were taken under provisions of the Penal Code concerning 'obstruction of business' following a general strike called by the KCTU on 2 July due to food safety concerns concerning imports of US beef and a series of other grievances including privatisation and soaring consumer prices.

TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** said:

“The Korean Government’s commitment to freedom has been thrown into question by this repression – they stand in the dock of global public opinion. I call on President Lee to release Jin Young-ok immediately, to withdraw all the arrest warrants, and to cease the harassment and surveillance of the trade union leaders and their families.”